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SANFORD AND MERTON

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Hal was brave, and he took hold of the snake by its neck, and tore it Tom's leg.—Page 8.

SANDFORD AND MERTON.

IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE.

By MARY GODOLPHIN.

"Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth."
MARMION.

ILLUSTRATED.

A. L. BURT COMPANY,
PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK.

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PREFACE.

THE great popularity of "SANDFORD AND MERTON" among all classes of young readers has induced the Author to select it for the purpose of translation into easy words of one syllable. But in order to maintain the identity of the book, it has been thought right to retain the proper names of Sandford, Merton, and Barlow, which form the only exceptions to the rule of using words of one syllable exclusively. The writer takes this opportunity of acknowledging the valuable aid she has received in monosyllabic words from the Rev. E. Dalston's book of "Brief Thoughts," by the kind permission of the author.

SANDFORD AND MERTON.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was a man of great wealth, whose name was Merton, and he had a young son, whom he made the whole joy and pride of his heart. This boy had but to cry for a thing, and Mr. and Mrs. Merton would give it to him.

When friends came to dine at the house, Mr. Merton would help Tom first, lest he should shock the guests with his cries; and when they sat down to tea, Tom would not wait, but would seize hold of the cake and jam and eat them.

The least rain gave him cold. He was kept in doors when the wind was in the east; and in a high wind, young Tom was not to stir out of the house, lest he should take a chill.

He could not leap, or jump, or run, nor was there a child's game that he could play at; and Mrs. Merton would not let him learn to read, for Tom said it made his head ache.

A man of the name of Sandford, who kept a farm close to Mr. Merton's grounds, had a son just Tom's age, and his name was Hal.

This boy was brought up to be much out in the fields with the men on the farm, and to drive the cows, and mind the sheep. He had a nice frank face, and you had but to look at him to love him.

While young Hal ate his meals, if he saw a poor wretch in want of food, he was sure to give him half of his own, if not all of it. He would not rob the birds' nests of their eggs or young ones, and would join in no kind of sport which gave pain to poor dumb brutes. There was not a horse on the farm that did not know Hal, and like to feel his hand pat and stroke him; toads and frogs, which most of us kill when we find them, were quite safe with Hal, who would say they had as much right to live as we have.

You could trust Hal for the truth of all he told you; if you were to say he should have a plum cake if he would but tell a lie, yet would he not tell one.

The way in which Hal Sandford came to know Tom Merton was this. One fine day Tom took a walk in the fields with his nurse, when what should start up from the high grass but a large snake, and coil round Tom's leg! The nurse ran for help, while Tom did not dare to stir from the spot.

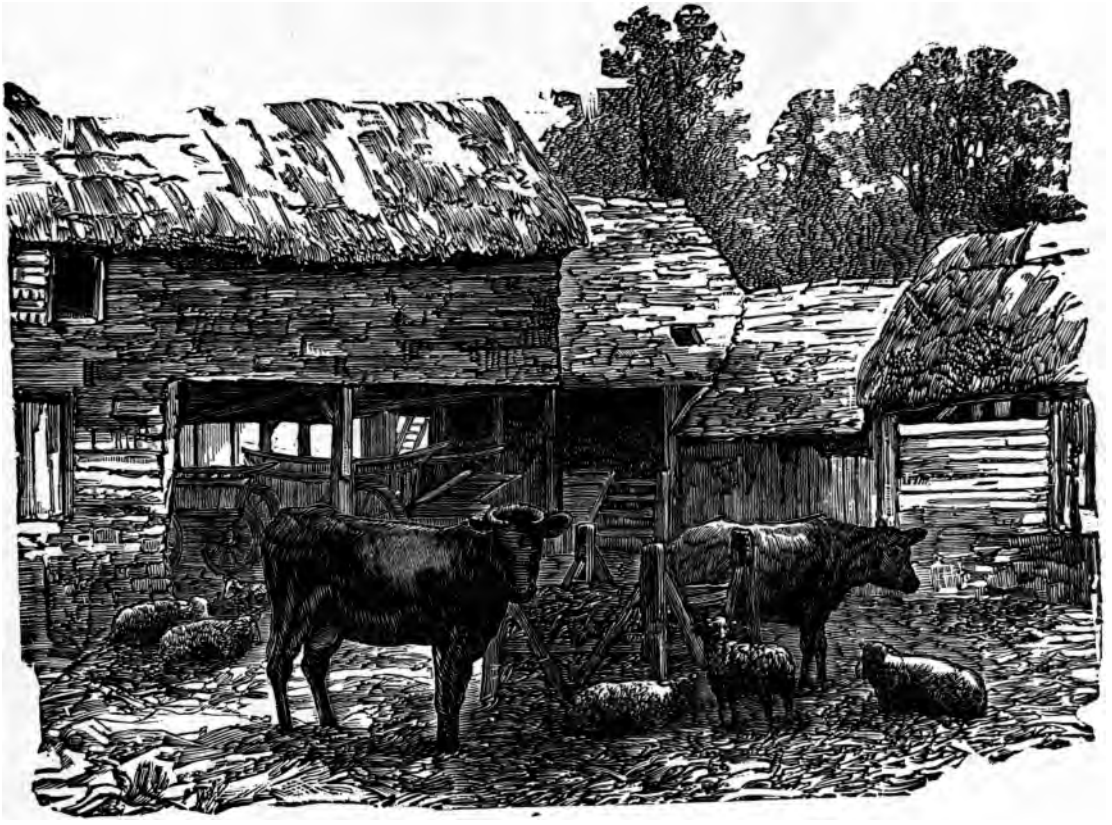
Just then Hal ran up to see the cause of such cries. But poor Tom could not speak, for the sobs came so fast. All he could do was to put out his leg to show him the snake. Hal was brave, and he took hold of the snake by its neck, and tore it off from his leg.

Mrs. Merton, who had heard the cries, came up quite out of breath. She caught her dear boy in her arms to kiss him, and hear if he was hurt.

"No," said Tom, "I am not; but I think the snake *meant* to bite me, and would have done so, if that boy had not come to pull him off from my leg."

"And who are you, my dear, to whom we owe so much?"

"My name is Sandford," said Hal. "Our farm is just at the foot of the hill."



THE FARM.

"Well, my child, you are a dear, brave boy, and you must go home and dine with us. You shall be my child from this time; will you?"

"If you please, if I may have my own home too," said Hal.

Mrs. Merton sent to the farm to say where Hal was to dine, and then led him by the hand to her own house, where she found Mr. Merton, and told him all that took place in the field.

Then they took him through the great halls, till they came to the room where they were to dine. There was a train of men to wait on them, and the board was spread with food that Hal thought might feed a whole town. Mr. Merton said grace, and Mrs. Merton, who saw Hal's eyes rest on a gold cup, said:

"Should you like to have such a fine cup of your own to drink out of, my boy? It is Tom's cup, but I am sure he will be glad to give it to his kind young friend."

"Yes, that I will," said Tom; "for I have quite as fine a one, as well as two large ones."

Hal.—"Thank you, with all my heart; but I will not take it, for I have one I like quite as well at home."

Mrs. Merton.—"How so? Do they drink out of such cups as this at the farm?"

Hal.—"We drink out of long cups, made of horn such as the cows have on their heads; and they suit us best, for they do not make us cross."

Mrs. Merton.—"Make you cross, my child. What do you mean?"

Hal.—"Why, when the man threw down that great bright thing, I saw that it made you look quite pale in the face. Now, our horn cups are thrown down by us all, and no one minds it."

Mrs. Merton (to Mr. Merton).—"Of a truth, my dear, I do not know what to make of this boy; he says such strange things!"

The man had let fall a large gold cup, for which Mrs. Merton took him to task for his want of care. Mrs. Merton then gave Hal a glass of wine, and bade him drink it off.

Hal said with thanks that he did not wish to take it.

"But, my dear," said she, "this is sweet and nice, and as you are a good boy, you may drink it up."

"Ay!" said Hal; "yet Mr. Barlow said at church that we ought not to eat and drink, save when we stand in want, and that this was what the good men of old were taught by our Lord."

Here Mr. Merton drew back in his chair. "And pray," said he, "do you know who these men were?"

Hal.—"Oh, yes, sir, to be sure I do."

Mr. Merton.—"And who were they?"

Hal.—"Why, sir, there was a time when men had grown so bad that they did not care what they did. The great folk were proud, and the poor would not work nor be taught. And then there came a man from God, whose name was Christ, and he went from place to place to do good, and cure men of all sorts of ills, and taught them what they ought to do. He chose out twelve men to go with Him and do the same things. These twelve men did not care what they ate and drank: for food they had dry bread, and they drank from the wells. They told all whom they met to love God, and to do His law; to heal the sick, feed and clothe the poor, and to love all men. And so the world was more kind and good through the means of Christ our Lord."

"On my word!" said Mr. Merton, "I should be glad if Mr. Barlow would take our Tom to teach him, for it is time for him to learn to read. Tom, should you like to be a sage like our young friend here?"

"I don't know what a sage means; but I should like to be a *king*, for he is rich and fine, and all men wait on him and fear him."

"Well said, my dear!" quoth Mrs. Merton, as she rose

to give her child a kiss. "And a king you ought to be! And here's a glass of wine for you. Should you not like to be a king, Hal?"

"I don't know what that is," said he; "but I hope I shall soon go to the plough and work for my own bread, and then I shall have no need of men to wait on me."

"But should you not like to be rich, my dear?" said Mr. Merton.

"No, sir."

"No, you goose?" quoth Mrs. Merton; "and why not?"

Hal went on—"Well, there is but one rich man that I know, and that is Squire Chase, and he rides through folk's corn when he hunts, and kills their dogs, lames their cows, and swears at the poor; and they say he does all this for that he is rich, though they dare not tell him so to his face. Oh, I would not have men hate me as they hate him for all the world!"

Mrs. Merton threw up her eyes at this speech of Hal's, but said no more.

At night Hal went home to the farm, and Mrs. Sandford kept him up till it was quite late, to hear what he had to say of the folk at the great house.

"They were all kind to me," said Hal; "but I would quite as soon have been at home, for I had hard work to get a meal. There was a man to take my plate, a man to give me drink, and a man to stand by my chair, just as though I had been lame or blind. And I was made to sit still two whole hours to hear Mrs. Merton talk to me, but not as Mr. Barlow does; for she thought I ought to love fine clothes, and wish to be a king or a rich man (and to have all the folk hate me, as they do Squire Chase)." While Hal told all this to Mrs. Sandford at the

farm, at the great house much of the talk ran on young Hal.

Mr. Merton thought that Hal might put to shame boys who were in a high rank of life. "A grace of dress and a way of the world," said he, "a man may soon pick up; but the real seat of good taste must be in the heart and mind, not in dress and fine airs."

"My dear," said Mr. Merton, "I think this boy of the farm has in his mind the seeds of a true and great man. And I know of no one thing that would give me more joy than to find that our child did not fall short of Hal Sandford of the Farm House.

"It is our fault that Tom has not been taught to read, and to learn what most boys of his age know. I have long seen all this, but have not as yet told out my thoughts to you. I have made up my mind to place Tom with Mr. Barlow, if he will take him. And I mean to ask Sandford if he will let me pay to have his son taught by Mr. Barlow for a few years while Tom is there, if Mr. Barlow will take the boys in hand." Mr. Merton said this in so firm a tone, that his wife at last made up her mind to part with her dear boy.

They wrote to ask Mr. Barlow to dine with them, that they might know what he thought of the plan, and he told them that he would do his best to teach their son, but not if he was paid for it. He said he would take Tom in his house as a friend, till he could find out if those faults which he saw in him would yield to his will. So, in a short time Tom was sent to his house, where Hal had been for a week or more.

CHAPTER II.

THE next day Mr. Barlow took a spade, and gave Hal a hoe, that they might set to work and dig up the weeds.

"All that eat should work," said Mr. Barlow. "See here, this is my bed, and that is Hal's. We both work at them for some time each day, and he that can raise the best crops will fare the best. Now, Tom, I will mark you out a piece of ground, and all that grows on it shall be your own."

"No," says Tom, "I don't choose to slave like a boy at the plough."

"Just as you please," said Mr. Barlow; "but Hal and I will mind our work."

By and by Mr. Barlow said it was time to leave off, and he brought out a dish of ripe plums, and gave one half to Hal, while he ate the rest. Tom thought he should have had his share; but when he saw that he was left out, he flew in a rage, and burst out with sobs and cries.

"What do you cry for?" said Mr. Barlow.

Tom said not a word.

"Well, sir, if you don't choose to talk, you need not do so. No one need talk in my house if they do not like it."

Mr. Barlow and Hal then went for a walk in the fields, and Hal saw a kite on the ground, which had a young chick in her claws. The kite flew off when Hal came up to it, and left the chick much hurt, but still it had life in it.

"Look, sir," said Hal, "see how he bleeds and hangs his wings! I will take him home when I go to the farm, where he shall have part of my meals till he is well."

Hal's first care was to put his chick in a cage with some

fresh turf and some crumbs of bread, and then Mr. Barlow and he went to dine. In the mean time poor Tom was glad to find that at last a meal was spread, and took his chair to sit down to it with the rest.

"Stop, sir," said Mr. Barlow; "as you are too proud to work, we, who are not, do not choose to work for you."

At this speech Tom wept as if his heart would break, but more from grief than rage, for he saw that no one in the house took heed of his cries.

But Hal said to Mr. Barlow: "Pray, sir, may I do as I please with my share of the meal?"

"Yes, to be sure you may," said he.

"Why, then, I will give it all to Tom, who wants it more than I do."

Tom took it with thanks, but he did not lift his eyes from the ground.

"I see," said Mr. Barlow, "that proud young boys who will not work, are not too great to take the bread from those who have gone through some toil to earn it."

The next day, Mr. Barlow and Hal went to work once more; but they had not been out long, when Tom came to them to ask if he might have a hoe too. Mr. Barlow then gave him one; but he did not know how to use it. So Mr. Barlow laid down his own spade, that he might teach Tom, and in a short time he got on well with it. When the day's work was done, they all three sat on a bench to eat fruit; and Tom had his share, which he ate with great glee.

From this time, Mr. Barlow and the boys went day by day to work at their beds; and as they sat in the shade to rest, Mr. Barlow gave Hal this tale to read out:

"A fly and an ant once came to words as to which stood

first in rank. The fly said, 'How can you place your mean state by the side of mine? Look how I soar up in the air, skip round the head of a king, and kiss the lips of a queen! I toil not, nor stoop to work; but live a life of ease. What can you have to say to this?'

"'Why,' quoth the ant, in a sharp tone, 'to be made much of by kings and queens is a great thing, I grant, but not if they deem you a pest. I think it is but your small size that screens you from their wrath; and as to work, you will learn the use of it when the frost and snow come, and the cold winds blow.'"

Hal Sandford now went home for a week or so to the farm; while Tom Merton with Mr. Barlow went on with their work at the clumps day by day. When they sat on the bench to eat their fruit, Tom made sure that Mr. Barlow would read to him; for as to poor Tom, he did not so much as know how to spell. But that day Mr. Barlow had too much to do to read to him.

At last the thought struck him, that if he could but read like Hal Sandford, he should not need to ask Mr. Barlow or Hal to do so for him. "Why may not I do what Hal Sandford has done?" thought Tom. "To be sure, he is sharp; but he could not have read if he had not been taught. The first thing when he comes home, I will ask him to teach me."

In ten days' time Hal came back from the farm, and Tom said to him:

"Do you think you could teach me to read?"

Hal.—"To be sure I could."

Tom then took up a book for the first time in his life, and on that day he learnt more than most boys could have done.

Months went on, and Tom took so much pains with his

task, and was so quick at it, that he now read out to Mr. Barlow this tale:

"A poor lark was kept in a cage that hung on a wall in a town that was full of dust and dirt. One day as he stood on his piece of dead turf to sing out his sweet song, a finch said: 'How canst thou sing while shut up in that vile cage?' 'Finch, finch!' rang out the lark, 'Know you not that if I did not sing while I am shut up here, I should fail to call to mind my song when the time came for me to get free, and mount up to the sky!'"

Mr. Barlow.—"You have done well, my boy, to learn to read; for now you will not find the time creep as it did, and you will soon get at all you want to know."

"Yes," said Tom; "I make no doubt that I know more than most men do; and I am sure, though there are six black men in our house, there is not one of them that can read half so well as I can."

Mr. Barlow, whose face grew grave at this vain speech, went on to hint to Tom that he would not have known how to read, if his friend Hal had not taught him, day by day, and step by step.

As the time had now come for the boys to go out to play, Tom took his bat and ball, and the ball fell in a field of corn, not far from where a poor boy was at play. "Bring that ball to me," said Tom, in a harsh voice. But the boy took no heed of this, but went his way, and left the ball. Tom now spoke in a tone still more gruff:

"If I come on that side the hedge, I will thrash you till I take all the breath out of you."

At this the boy gave a loud laugh, which put Tom in such a rage, that he sprang to the top of the hedge, from whence he would have made a jump so as to bring him in

the field where the boy stood, but his foot slipt, and he fell in a wet ditch which was full of mud. There poor Tom lay for some time, to kick from side to side, in the vain hope that he should get free. But his feet stuck in the mud, or slid off from the bank, and the mire clung to his smart coat. He first lost his right shoe, and then his left, and his fine hat fell from his head, and was spoilt by the mud. There Tom must have lain, had not the poor boy come to his aid. Tom could not look up at him for shame, but ran home in such a plight, that Mr. Barlow had fears that he had been hurt. But when he heard the tale from Tom, he could not keep a smile from his lips, and told him to look sharp when next he went to play at ball that he did not thrash poor boys in rags. When Tom had seen to his dress, Mr. Barlow gave Hal this tale to read out to Tom:

"A fine war-horse broke loose from his stall, and sprang down the road with a loud, shrill neigh. An ass that went on the same track, with a load upon his back, was told by the horse, in a proud tone, that if he did not clear the way he should tread him in the dust; so the poor ass got out of his way as fast as he could.

"In course of time the horse went to the war, and was shot in the eye, and was now of no use as a war-horse, so he was sent to work on a farm.

"Stript of all his pomp, he was met by the ass, who said to him, "Hey day, is it you? Well, I must say I thought your pride would have a fall."

Hal thought the grand war-horse must have had the look of a fool, when the ass came up and saw him at work on the farm!

"Yes," said Mr. Barlow, "much the same as Tom did,

Tom's foot slipt, and he fell in-to a wet ditch which was full of mud.—Page 20.

Sandford and Merton.

when the poor lad whom he meant to beat, lent him his aid as he lay in the ditch!"

"Sir," said Tom, "I should not have had the least wish to beat him, but he would not bring my ball."

Mr. Barlow.—"And what right had you to make him bring your ball?"

Tom.—"Sir, he was but a poor boy; and I am the son of a rich man."

Mr. Barlow.—"So, then, the sons of rich men have a right to make poor boys do for them what they choose?"

Tom hung down his head, and said: "But he might as well have done it, as he was on that side of the ledge."

Mr. Barlow.—"And so I dare say he would have done, if you had said, 'I will thank you to pick up my ball,' in a kind sort of tone. Let us not set the poor at naught, Tom. We may be poor in this world's goods; we may have no lands, no gold, no fine clothes, no great friends; but if we have *love* in our hearts, we have what is worth more than the whole world with all its wealth."

This speech from Mr. Barlow found its way to Tom's heart, and he could scarce keep the tears from his eyes. He made up his mind to give the poor boy some new clothes the first time he could see him.

Tom did not have to wait long, for that same day he met him, and said:

"Boy, have you no clothes but those on your back?".

"No, sir, I have not," said the boy. "There are eight of us, and the rest are as much in rags as I am, but I think we should not so much mind that if we could get more to eat. Dad is ill, and can't work, so that we must all starve if God does not take care of us."

Tom did not say a word more, but set off at full speed to

the house, and soon came back with a loaf of bread, and a whole suit of his own clothes.

"Here," said Tom, "you were kind to me, so I will give you all this, for I have more.

The joy shone from the face of the poor boy; and as to Tom, he felt as glad as the boy, for it was the first time he had gone out of his way to do to a friend what he would like that friend to have done to him, if he had been in his place. He did not wait to hear the poor boy's thanks, but went home with a strut, and found Mr. Barlow, to whom he told all that he had done.

Mr. Barlow said: "You have done well to give the boy the clothes; but what right had you to give my loaf of bread?"

Tom.—"Why, sir, the boy said he stood much in need of food, and was one of eight, and all the rest of it."

Mr. Barlow.—"This made it just and kind in you to give what was your own, but not that which was mine. I do not grudge the boy my loaf of bread; for there is no one to whom I would so soon give a loaf of bread as to that poor boy, who had it in his heart to do for you what he would wish you to have done for him, were he to lie and kick in the mud of a ditch. Still, Tom, there is but one name to give to this act of yours, and that is the word '*theft.*' It may be you have heard that it is said, 'He who would steal an ounce would steal a pound.'"

Mr. Barlow then told Tom of a boy who stole a horn book from school, and brought it home to his aunt; yet she did not take him to task for what he had done, but gave him some plums for his pains. In course of time the child grew up a thief; and at last was caught in a great theft, for which he was hung. A crowd came to look on, and

with them the aunt of the thief, who tore her hair and beat her breast. The thief saw her, and said to those who were in charge of him, "Give me leave to say a word to my aunt." When she came up, he put his face to hers as if he would speak—and bit off her ear! At this the aunt gave a loud cry, and all who stood near were struck with awe at so base a deed. "Good sirs," said the young man, "it is she who is the cause of my guilt; for if when I stole a horn book from school she had had the sense to point out to me that I had done wrong, I should not have come to this end."

"So you see," said Mr. Barlow, "if we do not crush sin in the bud, it will grow strong and crush us."

Just then a boy in rags came up to Tom with some clothes in his hand. His eyes were black, as if he had had a fight.

"What does all this mean?" said Mr. Barlow to the poor boy.

"Sir," said he, "Mr. Merton did all he could to beat me when I would not fetch his ball, but he fell in the ditch, and then, as I took him out, he gave me these clothes here, all out of good will I know. But I was such a fool as to wear them, and this made all the boys hoot at me, and they said I was 'French'; but I don't choose them to call me 'French,' and I don't want the clothes, so I have brought them back."

Then Tom, who had not said a word all this time, spoke to the boy thus:

"I am sure you are much hurt, and as for the clothes I gave you, I grieve that they should have done you all this harm."

As soon as the poor boy had gone, Hal and Tom made

a plan to buy some clothes for him that would suit his rank of life. So the next day, at dawn, off they set.

They had not gone far when they heard the noise of a pack of hounds some way off.

Soon the dogs came up, and a man on a fine horse said:

"Have you seen the hare?"

Hal did not speak, so the squire said once more, in a loud tone:

"Which way has she gone?"

"Sir, I shall not tell you," said Hal.

The grand man then came up to Hal to lash him with his whip. "Now, you young thief you, will you tell me now?"

To which Hal said:

"If I would not tell you then, I won't now, though you should kill me."

But the squire went on with his lash, till a loud cry of "help, help!" from Tom brought a friend of the squire's to the spot, who said:

"For God's sake, Chase, leave off! What are you at? You will kill the child if you do not take care."

Then he said to Hal:

"Why, my dear, would you not tell the squire which way the hare had gone, if you saw her?"

Hal, who had scarce got breath to speak, said:

"I don't choose to let the man kill the hare if I can help it."

Just then the hounds burst out in full cry; so the squire got on his horse, and rode off with the rest. Tom came up to ask Hal how he did, and flung his arms round his neck.

"I feel sore," said Hal, "but that will go off soon. If I had been a man, he should not have done it. I don't think

he meant to kill me. But it is all past now; and we ought to try to love those that hate us: hate the *deed* we *may*, but not the *man*—as Mr. Barlow says our Lord Christ did. And then, may be, the squire may come to love me, and grieve at what he has done."

CHAPTER III.

THE next day, when the boys went to their books, Hal chose this tale to read out:

"A stag, that had left the hounds some way off, came up to a man who was at work on a farm, to ask if he would show him some safe place to hide in. The man bade him hide in his own hut, which was close by. So the stag lay there quite still, and in a short time up came the squire and his train with the hounds. The squire, who caught sight of the boor, drew back from the rest, and said: 'Have you seen the stag pass this way?'

"'No,' said the boor, in a loud tone, 'I have not.'

"At the same time he held out his hand with a sly look, to point to the hut where the stag lay; but the squire took no heed of this sign, nor did he see it. So on he went to join the rest.

"As soon as they were quite out of sight, the stag stole from the hut, but said not a word to the boor, who now gave a loud call to him.

"'Wretch!' said he, 'you owe your life to me; yet you say not one word of thanks!'

"'Nay,' said the stag, 'I should fill your ears as full of praise as my heart is of joy, if I had not, through the door of the hut, seen your *hand* play false to your *tongue*.'"

The boys then went to the shop, and Tom laid out a pound in clothes for the poor boy, and said to Hal: "*You* must take them there, you know."

"That I will," said Hal; "but why will you not take them?"

Tom.—"Well, it is not for the child of a rich squire to take such a load as that; the sons of the rich have all these things done for them."

Hal.—"Then I should think it must be a bad thing to be one of them; if all were rich, things would not be done: and then we should all starve."

Tom.—"Starve!"

Hal.—"Yes: you could not live, could you, if you could not get bread?"

Tom.—"No, I know that."

Hal.—"Bread, you know, is made from a plant, and we call it wheat."

Tom.—"Why, then, I would pick it and eat it."

Hal.—"Then you would have to work, you see. But wheat is a hard grain, and you would not like to eat it."

Tom.—"No; but how comes bread, then?"

Hal.—"Corn is sent to a mill. There is one close by, and if you ask Mr. Barlow he will go with you, for he knows the man who works it."

Tom.—"Well, I will, for I should much like to see them make bread."

Just then the boys heard a cry, and saw a horse come down the lane at full speed, and drag a man with him.

Hal, who was glad to do a kind act, ran up to a gap in the hedge, which the horse meant to go through, and just as the horse made a stop that he might take a good leap, Hal caught hold of his head.

Two or three men soon came up, and set Squire Chase on his legs—for the squire it was. He gave a wild stare round him, and took breath; the first use he made of it was to swear at the horse, and to ask who it was that laid hold of his head.

"Who?" said his friend; "why, the self-same boy that you gave all those blows to; and had it not been for him, that skull of yours would have had more flaws in it than it has now."

The squire gave a glance at Hal, with a face full of shame. At length he put his hand in his purse, and gave him a pound. But Hal drew up with a look of pride, and would not take it.

So the boys went and found the poor lad, whose cot they were in search of. Tom told him that they had brought him a suit of clothes, in which there could be no fear that the boys would call him "French." He gave all the young boys a suit each, and the thanks from the poor folk made Tom so full of joy that he said, as he went home, that he would spend all that Mr. and Mrs. Merton gave him in the same way.

In a few days, Mr. Barlow took the two boys to the mill. Tom was struck with the great sails, which went round and round with the wind, and were made to move two large flat stones to bruise the corn.

As they went home, Hal said to Tom:

"So you see, now, that if no men chose to work, we should have no bread to eat."

Tom.—"Why not? Does not corn grow in the ground?"

Hal.—"Corn grows in the ground, but then first you must plough the ground to break it up; then they sow the

Hal ran up to a gap in the hedge and caught the horse by the head.—Page 27.
Sandford and Merton.

seed in the ground, and rake it, and the seed grows, and shoots up, and at last the corn gets ripe, and they reap it."

Tom.—"How strange, to be sure! I should like to sow some seed, and see it grow. Do you think I could?"

Hal.—"Yes, of course you could; and if you will dig the ground, I will get you some corn to sow."

The next day Tom was up with the lark, and dug the ground for some hours. He must needs tell Mr. Barlow, and said: "Am I not a good boy to work so hard to raise corn?"

Mr. Barlow.—"That I do not know till I hear what use you will make of it."

Tom.—"Why, I shall have it ground, and will get your cook to show me how to make bread of it; and then I will eat it, and tell my nurse that I ate bread out of corn sown in my own piece of ground."

Mr. Barlow.—"That will be well done, but is no more than all the folk round do; and were they not to do it they would starve."

Mr. Barlow then told Tom of an old man who had a field, and by his skill and care made it serve him for food. At length he fell ill, and sent for his three sons, that he might give them his last charge. "My sons," said he, "there is one thing which with my last breath I beg of you to do, and that is to seek out a rich gift which I have left you, and which you will find in my field"—but here the poor old man's voice grew faint, and his head sank down on his breast in death. The sons were in too much griet for their loss to put in force that which the old man had bade them do, till want drove them to seek in the field for what they thought must be a hoard of gold. So they made a search of it, till there was not a clod that they did not turn. At last they gave it up.

"It is strange that the old man should have set us on this long search for a thing that is not here," said Jack.

"Come," said Dick, "since we have gone through so much toil on the field, we may as well sow it with *corn*, and so make the most of our pains."

At this bright thought they set to work to sow the grain; and in due time a crop sprang up, five times as large as those crops which had grown there in the old man's life time.

The youths now said that *this* must have been the wealth the old man meant, and that his wish was that they should earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Hal now came in from the farm, where he had been for a short time, and brought with him the chick which he took from the claws of a kite, and which had now got quite well, and was so fond of Hal that it ran by his side like a dog, would perch on his arm, sit in the breast of his coat, and eat crumbs out of his hand.

"Well, how odd, to be sure!" said Tom: "I thought all birds flew off when a man came near them. The fowls that are kept at our place will not let me touch them."

Mr. Barlow.—"Birds and beasts would not be wild if they did not *fear* us, and if we are kind to them they get tame. I think if a large beast of prey were to come up to you, you would not run from him."

Tom.—"Should I not, in truth? Ah, as fast as my feet would take me."

Hal then told him that he knew a boy who had a tame snake, and when he ate his bread and milk, he would call the snake up to him to drink out of his bowl. He gave him a pat now and then with his spoon if he ate too fast; but the boy had no fear that he would bite him.

From that hour did Tom make up his mind that he would tame some pet. So off he set at once, with a large slice of bread in his hand, in search of a young bird or beast to pet; and the first thing he met was a young pig, that lay in the sun to bask. So Tom put on a soft smile, and said, "Pig, pig, my dear pig, here is some bread for you; come to me, come!" But the young pig gave a squeak and ran off to the old sow. "You young wretch," said Tom, "to run off when I want to feed and pet you." So he sprang at the pig and caught it by the leg with his right hand, and held out the large slice of bread with the left. But the young pig knew not what to make of it, and the squeaks it gave soon brought the old sow to the spot.

Tom held the sow in too much fear to keep her young one, so he let it go, and it ran just in front of Tom, which threw him down. Then the sow trod on him in her rage. It was Tom's turn now to be in a rage, so he took the old sow by the leg and beat her with all his might. The old sow led Tom through the midst of a large flock of geese that by chance fed near the spot where all this took place; the old goose, to save her brood, gave Tom a sharp peck with her bill, which put him to so much pain that his shrieks brought Mr. Barlow to the spot.

Tom, as soon as he could speak, told Mr. Barlow that it was all his fault, and that he might trace it to what he had told him.

"You said, sir, that to tame a bird or beast I ought to give him food, and be kind to him, and now all this comes of it."

Mr. Barlow.—"I see you have been in the mud, but I hope you are not hurt; now we will come home, that you may wash off the mud, and we will talk of what you did with the pigs and the geese by and by."

When Tom came down from his room, Mr. Barlow said: "My dear boy, what could be the cause of the sad plight I found you in? I hope that I was not the cause of it; but I don't think that I told you to catch pigs by the hind legs. The pig did not know what you meant, and so when you went to seize hold of him, the old sow who heard the cries of her young one came to help him."

Mr. Barlow then told Tom that, in days long gone by, a Greek slave wrote a tale to prove that it is not wise to play with edge tools, as Tom had just done; and this was the tale: "A wolf had a bone that stuck in his throat, and gave him so much pain that he ran with a howl to ask all whom he met to lend him a kind hand, and said he would give a large sum to bird or beast who would take it out. At last a crane put her long bill down the wolf's throat, and drew out the bone. The crane then said, 'Now, where is the fee which you spoke of?' 'Wretch, that you are!' said the wolf, 'to ask for more that this—when you have put your head in a wolf's mouth, and brought it safe out!'"

Hal and Tom now told Mr. Barlow that they meant to build a house.

"We mean to build one fit to live in. You said we ought to know how to do all things, lest we should get poor, or be cast on some wild part of the earth where there are no men to work for us; in that case you see, sir, we could build our own house."

Mr. Barlow.—"What is it to be built with, Tom?"

Tom.—"The first things we shall want are wood and an axe."

Mr. Barlow.—"Wood I can give you, and loads of it. but do you know how to use an axe?"

Tom.—"No, sir."

Mr. Barlow.—"Then if you tell me what wood you want I will cut down the trees for you."

Tom.—"Thank you, thank you."

Mr. Barlow then cut down poles as thick as a man's wrist, eight feet long, which the boys made sharp at the end to force them in the ground.

Mr. Barlow.—"Where shall you place your house?"

Tom.—"This will be the spot for it, just at the foot of this hill, for here we shall be warm and snug."

Hal took the stakes, and drove them in the earth, and made the house ten feet long and eight feet wide. When this was done, he and Tom took the small sticks of wood which they had cut from the stakes, and wove them in with the poles, so as to form a sort of fence.

To give them heart while they went on with this slow work, and to show them that if we want to make sure that a thing is done, we must work at it with our *own* hands, Mr. Barlow told them the tale of a lark that had a nest of young birds in a field of corn, and one day two men came to look at the state of the crop. "Well," says one of them to his son, "I think this wheat is ripe, so now go and ask our friends to help us to reap it."

When the old lark came back to her nest, the young brood told her what they had heard. "So they look to their friends for help," said she. "Well, I think we have no cause for fear."

The next day the man came; and as he saw no friends in the corn field, he bade his son fetch his kith and kin to help him.

This the young birds told to the old one when she came home.

"Fear not," quoth she; "I do not see that men go much

out of their way to help those that are of the same kith and kin."

In the course of a day or two, the man said to his son, "Hark ye, John! we will trust to none; but you and I will reap the corn at dawn of day."

"*Now*," said the old lark, "we must be gone; for when a man takes his work in his own hands, it is sure to be done."

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Hal and Tom went back to their work they found, to their great grief, that while they were in doors, a storm of wind and rain had blown down their new house; the stakes did not go so deep in the ground as they should have done; so that when the wind blew on the flat side of the wall, they had not strength to bear it; but Mr. Barlow struck the tops of the stakes, and drove them in so firm that they would be quite safe.

The next thing to be done was to put a roof on; so they put long poles to rest on the tops of the four walls, and on these they laid straw.

By and by the rain came down hard on it, and the boys were proud to think how dry and warm it kept them: but at last, the straw that was on the top got wet through; for as their roof was flat, there was no way for the rain to run off.

"The top should have more straw," said Tom.

"No," said Hal, "it must be that our roof is too flat; for you know all roofs slant, that the rain may run off from them."

The next day they set to work at a new roof, with straw for a thatch.

When this was done, they found that the walls, which were made of twigs, did not keep the wind out; so they put wet clay on each side of them.

Tom's wheat, which he had been to watch day by day, had now sprung up; and when he saw the green blade, he said, "Now, I think we could live if we were cast on some lone isle where there were no men to be found to work for us."

Tom thought that it would add much to the charms of their house if it had some plum and pear trees near it; so Mr. Barlow sent Tom to make choice of two fine strong ones. The boys took their spades to dig large holes to put them in, and broke the earth up that it might lie light on the roots, and then put them in. Tom held the tree while Hal threw the earth on the roots, and trod it down with his feet. Then they stuck large stakes in the ground, to tie the trees to, for fear a high wind should blow them down.

At the side of the hill there was a brook, not far from where the new house stood; the boys set hard to work for some days to form a sort of ditch to bring the stream down to the trees, for the air was hot and the ground dry, and they thought their trees might die for want of rain.

"On the bank of just such a brook as this, did the poor lamb meet the wolf," said Hal.

"What lamb, and what wolf?" said Tom. "Do tell me!"

"Well," said Hal, "I read of a wolf who went to quench his thirst at a brook, and by chance a young lamb stood there who would stray from the flock. The wolf had a wish to eat her, so for a plea he made out that the lamb

was his foe. 'Stand off the bank, sir,' said he, 'for you tread it down, which makes the stream thick, and all I can get to drink is foul.'

"The lamb said that she did not see how that could be, for the brook ran down hill to her from the spot where he stood.

"'But,' said the wolf, 'how dare you drink at all till I have had my fill?'

"Then the poor lamb told him that as yet her dam's milk was both food and drink to her.

"'Be that as it may,' said the wolf, 'you are a bad lamb, for last year I heard that you spoke ill of me and all my race.'

"'Last year, dread sir,' said the lamb; 'why, I have not yet been shorn, and at the time you name I was not born.'

"The wolf, who found that it was of no use to tell lies, fell in a great rage, and as he came up, flew at the poor meek lamb and made a meal of her."

As the day was fine, Tom and Hal took a stroll in a wood, and went so far that they were glad to sit down to rest. By and by a poor dame came up to them.

"My dears," said she, "you seem to have lost your way, come and rest in my cot."

"No," said Tom, "we have not lost our way, but we shall be glad to rest in your house." So they went in and sat by a fire made of turf. Tom, who had not till now seen such a fire, said, "What is it made of?"

The old dame told him that it was a peat fire, and made of the roots of heath and turf which they dig from the waste land, and then put it in the sun to bake.

The girl now came in with a bowl of warm milk from the cow, and a slice of brown bread for each.

At last the boys said they must go home, so Tom gave the dame a crown for all that she had done for them.

"No, bless you, my dear," said she, "I would not take it from you for all the world; for though my good man and I are poor, we can give a mess of milk to two young things like you, when they want it."

So the boys gave her their thanks, and left. But just as they went out of the door, two men came in, and said to her, "Is your name Stiles?"

"Yes, it is," said the dame.

"Then here's a writ from Mr. John Gruff," said one of them, "which I have to serve Mr. Stiles with; and if he does not pay the debt, which is twelve pounds, we shall take your goods and sell them to pay it."

"Nay," quoth the dame, "this could not have been meant for Stiles, for he has no debts."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Stiles, we are right, and when he comes in we will talk with him; and in the mean time we can make out our list of goods, in case Mr. Stiles should not have cash to pay the debt with."

Stiles soon came home.

"Oh, my poor Ned!" said she, "here is sad news for you; but I think it can scarce be true that you owe a large sum to Mr. John Gruff."

"Nay," said Stiles, "I do not know how much it was; but when Frank Home lost all he had, I was bound for him to keep him from jail, and when he went to sea, he told me he would send me all he could spare from time to time, but we have not once heard of him."

Then the poor wife burst out in loud grief, and told him where the two men were, and what they had come for.

Ned's face grew red with rage, and the first thing he did

"What is it made of?"

was to seize an old sword, and then said: "It shall not be, I will die first!" He would have run to the room where the men stood, but his wife caught hold of his arm to beg of him not to stir a step. "It would be a sin," said she; "what if you were to kill the men? Put up the sword, Stiles, for my sake if not for theirs."

Hal, too, took hold of his hand, till at last Stiles sat down, hid his face in his hands, and said, "God's will be done."

Tom now gave his young friend a look, which was as much as to say, Come with me; and then went out of the house, and took the road which led to Mr. Barlow's. As he went, his thoughts were full of the scene he had just left; when he got home, he went at once to Mr. Barlow and said:

"I want to go home, and at once, for I have a thing to tell them at home which I am sure you will like to hear of."

Mr. Barlow did not press Tom to say what it was, but sent him home on his horse, with a man to take care of him.

Tom did not lose much time, but said at once to Mr. Merton: "You told me some time since that you were rich. Now will you please to give me a large sum to take back with me?"

Mr. Merton.—"Yes, to be sure. Let us see first how much?"

Tom then told him of the sum that he meant to help Stiles with, but he did not say what use he should put it to.

Mr. Merton.—"But what can a child of your age want with such a sum?"

Tom.—"Well, I do not wish to name the use I mean to put it to, but if you will please to let me have it, I will pay you from time to time."

Mr. Merton.—"How can you pay me such a sum as that?"

Tom.—"Why, you know you give me new clothes, and fill my purse now and then. I will want no more clothes or cash till I have made it up."

Mr. Merton.—"But what can you want with all this?"

Tom.—"Pray wait a few days and you shall know, and if I make a bad use of it, don't trust me as long as I live, that's all."

Mr. Merton put the whole sum in Tom's hand, and told him that he must let him know what use he had put it to, and that if he did not like the way in which it was spent, he would trust him no more.

Tom's first care was to hunt up Hal, and ask him to come with him to poor Stiles's house. So the boys set off with all speed. As they came near to the house they heard loud sobs, which came from the dark end of the room, where sat the poor dame.

Tom took her by the hand, and said: "You were kind to me just now, and gave me bread and milk when I was half dead with heat and thirst, so I have made up my mind to be kind to *you*."

"God bless you, my child!" she said; "but you could not help me if you would; our goods are to be sold if we do not pay the debt; and *that*—oh! *that* we could not do; so my dear Ned and all our young ones must be sent out of doors, and none but God can help us!"

Tom' heart was too full to wait, so he took out his bag of gold and threw it on her lap. "Here, take this, will you?" said he, "and pay your debt with it."

The poor soul gave a wild stare at Tom, wrung her hands, and fell back in her chair. When Stiles saw her, he caught her in his arms, and said, "Why, Ann, what ails you?" But she sprang from him, and fell down on her knees to Tom. Stiles thought his wife had gone mad, and the babes ran to pull her by the gown. At the sight of them she said: "You young rogues! why don't you give thanks to this dear child, who has kept you from death?" At this Stiles said: "Why, Ann, you must be mad! What can this young boy do for us that will keep our babes from death?"

"Oh, Ned!" said she, "I am not mad, though I may seem to be. But look here, Ned! Look here! see what the good God has sent us by the hands of this dear child, and *then* tell me if I am mad or not!"

Sobs of joy from the poor man now came loud and fast, but this was too much for Tom, so he and Hal ran as fast as they could go, and were soon out of sight.

Mr. Barlow, Tom, and Hal now went out for a walk. They saw three men, who led three large bears by a chain. On the head of each of these bears sat an ape, which now and then gavè a grin. Tom thought it fine fun when the bear rose on his hind legs as he was bid, as well as to dance to the sound of bells. Mr. Barlow and the boys then went on their way, but soon they saw a crowd of men who ran with all their might, and they found that one of the bears had made a bound, and run off to the spot where Tom and Hal stood. Mr. Barlow, who had a stout stick in his hand, saw this, and bade Tom and Hal stay where they were; he then ran up to the bear, who stood still as if he would bite him, but Mr. Barlow struck him two or three hard blows, took hold of the end of his chain, and so made the huge beast give in. By and by, the man who kept the bear came up, and Mr. Barlow gave him the chain.

All this time the boys had stood quite still, to look on. But the ape that had sat on the head of the bear was thrown off when that great brute broke loose, and Tom, who thought he would be as brave as Mr. Barlow, ran up and took hold of the string to which the ape was bound. But the ape gave a snap at Tom's arm, and made his teeth meet in the flesh of it. Tom beat him with a stick which he had in his hand, till the ape at last gave in, and let Tom lead him.

Mr. Barlow took hold of the end of the chain and struck the bear two or three hard blows.—Page 43.

Sandford and Merton.

When they got back to Mr. Barlow's they found Mr. Merton's groom at the gate to take Tom home for a few days. Mr. and Mrs. Merton threw their arms round his neck with joy to see their dear boy once more. But Tom did not say a word of the sum he gave to Ned Stiles.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day they all three went to church, but they found that all eyes were cast on Tom. Mr. and Mrs. Merton knew not what to make of this, but would not ask what it meant till they had left the church. Then Mr. Merton said to Tom:

"What did all the folk stare at you for, my boy? What did it all mean?"

Tom had no time to tell him, for just then poor Ann Stiles ran up to him, fell down at his feet, and said he had, "through the grace of God, set them all free. Yes, dear child, I, my good man, and our babes all owe our lives to you."

All that Mr. and Mrs. Merton could do was to stand and gaze at what went on; but when they found that Tom's gift was the cause of it all, they threw their arms round the young boy's neck and wept.

Their hearts were too full for them to think of the crowd that stood round, till at last they went to their coach to hide the tears of joy which ran down their cheeks.

No one saw Tom fret at Mr. Barlow's, for since he had had Hal to *love*, his thoughts had been so much drawn off from *self* that it made a new life of it.

When Tom came back to Mr. Barlow's, the first thing he did was to go and look at his new house; but to his great grief he found that his choice plum tree, from which he was in hopes of so much fruit, had been cut at the root by the teeth of the hares, and was dead. Tom ran to Mr. Barlow in a great rage to tell him what "those vile hares had done."

Mr. Barlow.—"You should have had a fence put round your tree to save it from the hares. And as all things are so much in want of food now that this hard frost has set in, I know not what is to be said if they come too near for it, as the poor things must eat."

Tom said he did not like this cold time of the year at all.

"Well," said Hal, "I could tell you of a land, which is far north, where there are *no* trees, and where the men know not how to make bread, and have no sheep, hogs, or cows. They have large stags which live in herds; and the men kill part of the herd and live on the flesh, which keeps good a long time in so cold a clime. The skins of the deer they spread on the ground to sleep on, and make warm coats of them. They have but one kind of house, and that is made of poles, all of which meet at the top, where they leave a small hole to let the smoke through. They do not keep long to one spot, but from time to time they take down their house, pack it in their sledge, and set it up in some new place."

Tom.—"Do they draw the sledge with their own hands?"

Hal.—"The *deer* draw it for scores of miles at a time, and they go at full pace on the snow, which is as hard as a board. There are no fruit trees, think of that! no fields, no roads, no shops; bears and wolves prowl all round them so that the men have to hunt them. They kill the

bears with the shaft from their bow, save when they find them or the wolves in their dens, and then they use spears. When they have put a bear to death, they boil the flesh in a pot, and their friends all come to the feast."

Tom—"Poor men! I should think such a life must soon kill them."

Mr. Barlow.—"Have you found then that those who eat and drink most have the best health?"

Tom.—"No, I think not; for there are two or three men who come to dine with us, who eat such huge plates of meat that you would say they must burst, and these men have lost the use of their limbs; their legs swell as big as their waists, and they seem as though they could scarce put their feet to the ground."

Hal and Tom set off for a stroll in a wood, and they lost their way. The snow fell so fast, that their track could not be seen, so they stood in the stem of an old oak, which just held them.

"What shall we do?" said Tom, while the tears fell fast from his eyes.

"Do?" said Hal; "we must wait here till it clears up, and then we must find our way home."

Tom.—"But oh, if we had but a fire to warm us!"

Hal.—"Well, I have heard that if you strike a piece of flint on steel, a spark will come. I have a large knife here, and if I could but find a piece of flint, I could strike fire with the back of it; so let us try what we can do."

The boys made a search for some flint, and found some, though as the snow lay so thick it cost them some pains. Hal took the flints and struck them with all his might, till they were thin bits, and out of these he chose a piece which he hit with the back of his knife. He then got all the dry

leaves he could find, which, when put in a heap with small bits of wood, made a blaze from the sparks which he had struck. But the leaves were too damp to burn up, so the boys thought that as they could get no warmth, the best thing for them to do was to make their way home as well as they could. At each step Hal sank up to his knees in the snow. At length he saw a heap of dry wood that had been left with fire in it. "See, here's luck!" said he. "Look, here is a fire that wants but some wood to make it blaze up."

This it soon did, and Hal said: "Ah, Tom Merton, you know not what *want* is! I know some poor boys who have no fire to warm them, yet they do not cry in a year so much as you have done this half hour."

Just then who should come up but the poor boy to whom Tom gave the clothes! Hal said to him, "Can you show us the way out of the wood?"

"Yes, to be sure I can," said Jack (for that was his name). So Jack led the boys to his home. "Dad," said he, "here's Mr. Merton, who has lost his way, and is well nigh dead with cold."

So the man bade Tom and Hal sit down, and said: "There, young sirs, we *can* make you warm, and I wish we could ask you to sup with us, but I fear what we poor folk eat would be too coarse for such as you."

"Not so," said Tom, "for I feel as if I could eat the chair I sit on." Then the dame went to broil some meat for Hal and Tom; in the mean time the old man took up his book and laid it with care on the shelf.

Tom saw this, and said, "What book is that?" The old man told him it was the Book of God's Word. "When I am low I go to it, and it is sure to do me good. There

are words fit to speak peace to us when we stand in need of it, words to cheer us, words to guide us in the right path, and words to point out and bid us shun the wrong path."

In the mean time Jack had come home from Mr. Barlow's, where he had found him in great grief at the loss of the two dear boys who were in his care; and he came back with Jack to the cot just as Tom had had his meal, which would have made three such as Mr. Barlow could eat.

Tom and Hal rose to meet him, and to tell him how much grief they felt to have been the cause of all his fears. Mr. Barlow said in a mild tone that he thought it was not wise to stray so far from home. He took leave of the good folk of the cot, and then they all three set off home.

CHAPTER VI.

As Mr. Barlow and the two youths went on their way home the stars shone with a bright light. "I do not think there is a man that could count them!" said Tom, "for you might as well try to count the flakes of snow that fell while we were in the wood."

At this speech Mr. Barlow gave a loud laugh, and said: "Hal will tell you that it is *not* so. Can you not tell Tom the names of the groups of stars, Hal?"

Hal.—"Not all of them, I fear, sir."

Mr. Barlow.—"Come, Hal, as you were brought up at a farm, I think you can at least point out to us Charles's Wain."

So Hal bade Tom look at five bright stars, and three more a short way off.

Mr. Barlow.—"The four stars are like the wheels of a cart, and the rest are like the horse that draws the cart. Now, Tom, look well at them, and see if you can find a group of stars that are like them as to the way they stand."

Tom.—"No, sir, I do not think I can."

Mr. Barlow.—"Now look on the two stars which stand for the hind wheels of the cart, and raise your eyes straight up. Do you not see a bright star that seems to be, but is not quite, on a line with them?"

Tom.—"Yes, sir, I do."

Mr. Barlow.—"That is the Pole Star; it does not stir from its place, and if you look full at it, you may find the north."

Hal.—"How glad should I have been to know more of it that night that I was on the marsh; for I lost my track, and knew not where I was. At last I thought I must give it up, when on one side of me I saw a light not far off, as if some one went on the moor with a lamp. At first I did not quite like to go up to the man who (as I thought) held the lamp; but I made up my mind to be bold, and go up to it, and ask my way of the man."

Tom.—"And did he tell you the way?"

Hal.—"I thought at first that the light was on my right hand; and then it would seem to go in front of me, then to the left. I thought this was strange, but I went on with the chase, and just as I felt that I could grasp it, I fell in a pit, and found I was on the same side as the light, so I went in search of it once more, but still in vain; though I gave a loud cry to beg of him to halt, it was of no use, for the light went ten times as fast, and zig zag, so that I thought the man who held it must be drunk. The wind grew cold and bleak, and my clothes were wet through

with the rain. I sat down for a short time to think what I should do, but when I cast my eyes up to the sky, this brought to my mind that the last time I went that way the Pole Star was right in front of me, so it struck me that if I were to turn my back on it, and go in a straight line, I should get home; and so I did with ease by the light of the moon."

Tom.—"But, Hal, did you find out what the light was that you saw in the marsh?"

Hal.—"It was Will of the Wisp."

Tom.—"Who is he?"

Hal.—"They told me at the farm that it was a kind of air that comes out of the earth and takes fire, and that time out of mind men have run up to try to get near it, as I did, and like me, have been thrown in some pit or ditch."

The young boys had now got to Mr. Barlow's gate, and when they had sat a long time to talk of all that they had gone through, they went to bed.

The next day Mr. Barlow told the boys a tale from real life, which took place in the Alps, where the rocks are so high that the snow does not melt on the tops of them.

Well, it was from these Alps, on the 1st of March, that a mass of snow of huge bulk came down from a great height. All in the vale were then in doors, save two, Joe Roche and his son (who was a lad), and they had gone on the roof of their house to clean the snow from it. A priest, who just at that time went by on his way to the church, told them to come down from the roof as fast as they could, for he saw a large mass of snow roll down the side of the rocks of ice, which would soon be on them. The man and his son flew for their lives they knew not where; but they had not gone more than a few yards, when the

lad's foot slid on the ice, and he fell down. Roche went *back* a step or two to lift him up, and as he did so he saw the mass of ice and snow fall on his house and crush it.

When Roche came to think how all that he held most dear were now shut up in the snow to die, he was so struck down with grief that he fell to the ground in a kind of fit. At last he got safe to a friend's house some way off.

As the next month was sure to be hot, he knew the snow would melt, and from time to time he went to see if he could find a trace of his dear wife and babe. One day he threw earth on the snow that lay on his house (to melt it), then he broke through ice six feet thick with a strong bar, then thrust down a long pole, and with this he felt the ground.

The next day a friend went with him to work, and they found the spot where the house stood by a hole in the snow, but none of the dead could they see. They now made a search in a shed or stall which was some way from the house, and there they heard a cry of "Help! Help!"

He and his friend set to work with all their might to dig a hole, through which they crept, and Roche saw his poor wife all but dead, who just had the strength to say, with a faint voice, "I *knew* I could trust in God and you, Roche!" The young girl, too, still had life; and when they brought them to the top, it was as if they took them from the grave.

The wife had lost the use of her limbs from cold and cramp, and could not so much as sit up in her bed, but the girl soon got well.

"Dear me," said Tom, when Mr. Barlow had brought this tale to a close, "what things men have to bear!"

"They have, in good sooth," said Mr. Barlow. "Those

who have no wealth to give can show their love by a kind word or two, which, on the face of it, seems but a small thing—yet on the ear of him who thought to die with none to mourn him, it would fall like choice sounds from a lute, fill his eyes with tears, and tell him that one of the great race was near, and felt for him. It was some such thought as this that gave Roche strength for his work."

Tom.—"How is it that men can care to live in such a place as the Alps?"

Mr. Barlow.—"The Swiss have a great love for the land of their home. Which do you love best, Tom, the town or these green lanes?"

Tom.—"Oh, these green lanes and fields, to be sure!"

Mr. Barlow.—"Well, these Swiss who live on the Alps love their land best too, like you, Tom, and the Field Mouse."

Tom.—"What of him, sir?"

Mr. Barlow.—"Why, he must needs try what a town life was like, that he might make his choice. His friend the Town Mouse came to fetch him, and the Field Mouse spread a meal for his guest in his soft nest, which was in the hole of a tree.

"The Town Mouse could not taste such fare, not he! 'Let me be free with you, Peep' (for that was his name); 'I can't think how you can spend your life in this vile hole, with naught to look at but hills and rills, green grass and sky. Take my word for it, Peep, you will find it a good change to live in a town, for we dance and sing, and take our fill of the best.'

"So they set off side by side, till they got to a grand house, and through a chink they crept to a room where a feast was spread. There were all kinds of fowl, ham and

eggs, plates full of tarts and creams. Peep was quite wild with joy, and they set to work tooth and nail.

"But hark, a key turns in a lock, and lo! a big man comes in with three large dogs! The mice, in a great fright, now run for the chink, but their tails brush the jaws of a great dog ere they reach it; yet they get safe out at last.

"When Peep could fetch her breath, she said to Dame Town Mouse: 'I take my leave of town and great folk from this hour, and I long for the charms of the Downs and my snug nest in the tree; for,

'Though poor the fare,
Mice are most blest when free from care.'"

Tom and Hal now went to play with a snow ball which they had made, but which had grown to such a size that they could not roll it. Tom said they must strike work, for no one could have the strength to move it. "Oh," said Hal, "I know a cure for it." So he went to fetch two thick sticks five feet long, one of which he took in his own hand, and gave one to Tom, and then told him to shove his stick 'twixt the ball and the ground, while he did the same on his side; and then the ball went with ease.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the boys came home they went to their books, and Mr. Barlow gave them a sketch of some of the great wars that took place a long time since.

"Oh," said Tom, "what a fine thing it must be to go to

the wars, and dress up in a red coat, march to the sound of the drum, see the flags fly in the air, and be a man!"

"Nay," said Mr. Barlow, "these fine clothes and gay sounds are not all that make up such a life, for in time of war there is no set of men that have to go through more toil than they, for they march for whole days in the heat of the sun, or through cold and rain: and it may chance that they have no food to eat; and that while they sleep, the most they can have is some straw to lie down on."

Tom.—"Dear me, sir, what a sad sketch you draw of those brave men who fight for the land of their birth! I'm sure when they come home sick and ill from their wounds, those who sent them out should take care of them."

Mr. Barlow.—"In truth they should, Tom."

Tom sat still for a long time wrapt in thought.

"Well, Tom, what are your thoughts?" said Mr. Barlow.

Tom.—"Why, sir, I want to know how we can go to war and not break that law which you read to us once a week in church, 'Thou shalt not kill'?"

Mr. Barlow.—"If men took that law which you speak of as it is meant, there *would* be no wars but those which were fought with a view to *save* life. And, what is more, no man would be hung."

Tom.—"It seems to me, sir, that when they come to hang a man, it must make him think that they took the hint from him. And I am sure he can't think that we hold a man's life to be worth much, if we send two men out of the world when (if it were not for this law of our land) it need have been but one."

Mr. Barlow.—"I think you are right. As to wars, it will be a good time when we shall hear of no fights save

those which are fought by brutes. You must ask Tom to tell you of the war with the birds, beasts, and bat."

Hal.—"The bat—who could not be said to be bird or beast—at first kept out of the way of both, but when he thought the beasts would win the day, he was found in their ranks, and to prove his right to be there, he said, 'Can you find a bird that has two rows of teeth in his head as I have?' At last the birds had the best of the fight, so then the bat was seen to join their ranks. 'Look,' said he, 'I have wings, so what else can I be but a bird?' Thus to 'grind with all winds' was thought base in the bat by both sides of the fight, and he could not get bird or beast to own him; and to this day he hides and skulks in caves and stems of trees, and does not come out till dark, when all the birds of the air have gone to roost, and the beasts of the field are wrapt in sleep."

On their way home, Mr. Barlow and the boys saw a great crowd round the door of a house, and when they went in they saw there a man who had much skill in sleight of hand; so they sat down with the rest of the crowd.

"Sirs," said the man, "I have kept my best trick for the last. You see this swan; it is no more than a false swan, made up of wood and paint."

So the boys took it up, and then set it to swim on the small tank which had been brought there to play the trick on.

"Now this swan," said he, "which looks to have no sense or life, is of so strange a sort that he knows me, and will turn to me at all times when I call him."

The man then took a small piece of bread, made a shrill sound, and told the swan to come to the side of the tank to be fed. At the word "Come, sir," the swan gave a slow turn, and came up to the bread that was held out for it;

and let the man go which side he would, the swan swam up to him.

But Hal told him he thought he could play the trick, and the next day he made up a piece of wax in the shape of a swan, and put it in a tub for a pond, on which it swam with as much grace as the man's swan did, and came up to Tom when he held out the bread.

Hal gave him the swan to look at, and he saw that a long thin piece of steel ran through it from end to end; and that in the bread with which the bird was fed was put a bar of steel in the shape of a horse's shoe. But all this threw no light on Tom's mind. Mr. Barlow then put down some small bits of steel, near to which he brought the bar; and to see these jump up one by one, as the bar came near them, and dance from side to side, made Tom jump with glee.

Mr. Barlow then told him that this force in the steel is made use of in ships out at sea, when the steel is shut up in a glass case, and by its means the men can find out the north, south, east, and west.

Tom thought it most strange that a small bit of steel should help men to cross the vast seas and sail from port to port, and this too when the shades of night, and mist, and fogs, shut out the light.

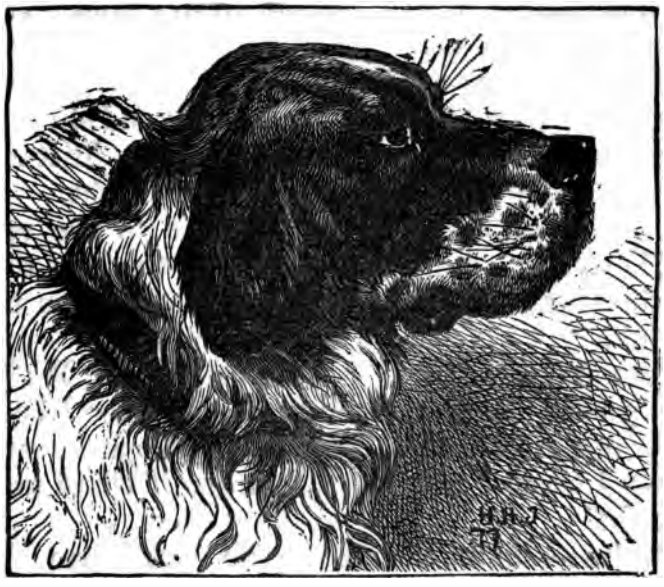
CHAPTER VIII.

THE time of year now drew near for Mr. Merton to have the poor folk to dine at his house, so he sent for them from far and near.

Mr. Barlow went to and fro to talk to them, and to help

them to this dish and that, and saw that they all had their fill. Tom and Hal did the same, and so far the day went off well.

When the meal came to an end, Tom took out the large dog (whose name was Dash), of which he was so fond that he would throw sticks in the pond by the hour for Dash to bring out and lay down at his feet.



Tom now thought he would make Dash draw him in a sledge, so when the dog was bound fast to the sledge, Tom took his seat with whip in hand, and set off, to the great glee of the boys and girls.

"Gee up, Dash! get on, sir!" said he. But poor Dash crept on the ground, and then made a dead stop. This brought a loud laugh from those who stood by.

Tom grew hot with rage, and gave his dog a sharp lash

with the whip. At this the dog tore off at full speed; but, as ill luck would have it, the pond was near at hand, and to this pond Dash made a rush, and one plunge brought him in the midst of it, with the chair at his heels, in which sat Tom.

Dash gave a bound which made the chair tilt on one side, and plunge poor Tom in the pond, and as he could not swim, he had hard work to get to dry land. He stood up to shake his wet clothes; at last Tom came to land! And he found he was in the midst of the troop of boys and girls, who now broke forth in fresh peals and shouts. This of course made Tom in a great rage, and he dealt cuffs and blows on all sides, which put the boys to flight.

The noise soon brought Mr. Barlow to the spot; he brought Tom home, and told him that the best thing for him to do was to go to bed, and he took him up some warm drink.

The next day Mr. Barlow said, in joke: "Well, Tom, shall you go out in your sled to day? I see I could not go with you, for I fear you beat those who are near you."

Tom.—"I should not have done so if I had not heard them laugh."

Mr. Barlow.—"Did their noise do you harm, that you should be so rough with them?"

Tom.—"No, it did not do me harm, as far as that goes, sir; but who does like boys to point and laugh at one?"

Mr. Barlow.—"Well, though it might be just to treat them so, you had no right to do it."

Tom.—"Well, sir, you would not have had me set off as fast as my legs would take me from all those rude boys round the pond, would you?"

Mr. Barlow.—"I think you chose a much worse part

Dash gave a bound and plunged poor Tom in the pond, and as he could not swim, he had hard work to get to dry land.—Page 60. *Sandford and Merson.*

when you gave them blows right and left. I think I should take the laugh in my own hands, as the bald man did when the wind blew off his hat and wig, and a laugh came from all those who saw his bald head. He said, 'How could I hope to keep strange hair on my head, when my own would not stay there!'"

The time had now come when Tom was to go to Mr. Merton's; and Hal, too, was to stay there some time.

When they came to Mr. Merton's house they found it full of rich folk who were to spend a gay time there.

As to Hal, no one took much heed of him, save Mr. Merton, who gave him a warm shake of the hand, and was most kind to him. But a young girl, whose name was Maude de Vere, came up to Hal to talk to him, and found what a nice lad he was.

In the mean time, his friend Tom sat with the grand dames, who said so much of his "wit and his sense," that Tom thought he must be all that they said he was, and that there was none there to match him.

Mrs. Merton was quite of the same mind as the rest. When she saw her boy, it was a great source of joy to her; but to see him shine with so bright a light as he now did, made her heart beat with a joy which she had not felt till now.

In fact, Tom went at such a rate that it would seem as if he took the lead, and Mr. Merton once or twice told him not to talk so fast, which his wife thought hard; and all her friends, when they left the room, said that Mr. Merton would spoil Tom's pluck for life.

Some of the guests went so far as to tell their host that if Mr. Barlow kept a school for boys at the plough, it was not for him to let this fine boy join them. They said, too,

that Mr. Barlow was an odd sort of man at best, for he went to no balls, nor did he play cards, nor dress well.

Just then the tea was brought in, which put a stop to all this talk. Then a young girl sang a Scotch song, which made Hal weep. By and by some French airs were sung; but as Hal could not make out the words, he soon was seen to give a yawn, and at last he fell back in his chair in a sound sleep! All the gay folk round him thought this rude.

Tom chose out two boys to play with all day, and shook off his dear, good friend Hal for two bad boys who might be said to love that which is wrong, and to hate that which is right.

CHAPTER IX.

ONE day Mr. Merton sent all the boys to a town not far off, to see a play. Young Tom sat with one of the bad boys on each side of him, and when the men came on the stage to act their part, the folk who sat near these three boys could not hear a word of the play for the noise they made.

At last Nash (who was the chief of them all) said, that it would be fine fun to hiss them off the stage, and then put out the foot lights, in short, to "kick up a row." Tom thought so much of Nash that he said "it would be just the thing!"

No one knows how long this noise would have gone on, if a man from a farm had not come up to Nash and told him in plain words that he for one would take the means to put down all this noise.

Nash said, "Do you think I shall stand this from such a low bred wretch as you are? Is it for you to think and feel for me?" And then he struck him on the face.

But the man took Nash by the neck, laid him at full length on the ground, set his foot on him and said: "Since you do not know how to sit still at a play, I will teach you to lie still; I could not have thought that a set of high born boys as you are would come to a place like this, and act a part so coarse and rude as yours has been this night. I am sure there is not a lad at my plough who would not have shown more sense."

With these words he let Nash rise from the ground where he lay, and he crept from the spot with looks more meek and mild than those he had brought there; and from that time all the boys sat out the play as still as mice.

The next day, when the guests all sat down to dine at Mr. Merton's house, those who did not go to the play said to the boys that they should like to hear what they thought of the piece.

"Why, sir," said Hal, "I am no judge of such things, for this is the first play I have seen; but, as far as the plot goes, it struck me that pride, spite, snares, and vain show made up the sum of it, and men came on and off the stage to tell lies and cheat."

At night the young folk sat down to cards; but Hal did not join them, as he did not know the game. Hal's friend, Maude de Vere, told him she would teach him. Yet Hal said, "No"; for he had spent all his cash, and so could not pay the stake as the rest did.

Maude then said she would lend him some if he would play.

Thus was Hal led on to sit down to cards with the rest.

He did not find the game hard to learn, and, as it fell out, Hal and Maude were the last two who were left to play; the rest gave up all claims to the stake, and one more round would give the whole of it to one of these two.

But Hal rose from the game, and told Maude that as he

Maude de Vere.

was to play from her fund, there was now no need for him to go on with it, as the pool was hers.

Maude.—"Will you lay out the sum for me, Hal?"

Hal.—"By all means; and I hope you will like the way I shall spend it."

The next day at dawn off Hal went, and no one in the

house saw him till they all sat down to dine; and he took his seat.

Some of them drew back with pride in their looks, when they saw all the dust from the road on his dress; but when Mr. Merton, in a kind way, made room for him by his side, Hal felt more at home.

The talk ran on the dance and the stage. And now they had all made up a plan to get up a fund for a man who took the part of Jaques in a play, and did so well that they thought they should like to give him a gold snuff box.

All gave to it but Hal. "Here's a fine rogue!" said they. "Last night we saw him with six crowns in his hand, which he had won from us, and now the wretch will not give us half a crown."

Of course there was much to vex Hal in all this, so he said:

"I do not see what good it is to give to a man who gets as much in a week as would feed a score of the poor round us in the same space of time."

This speech drew forth much scorn from the rest of the boys; and they sat down to cards. Maude, who did not play this time, said to Hal:

"Would it not have been best to give just what the rest have done, so as not to thwart them by so free a speech?"

Hal.—"Nay, I could not give it."

Maude.—"How can that be, Hal? Did you not win six crowns at the game of cards?"

Hal.—"That was yours, not mine. And I gave it in a way which I am sure you will like. There lives near us a poor old man, who has grown too weak to work, and his wife has a bad hand Their child took some work on our farm, but she left her place to nurse these poor folk. When

she comes to the farm for the day, she slaves hard that she may get food for them. So I gave it to her, and I hope you will like the use I have put it to."

Maude.—"Nay, I thank you much for the good fame in which you hold me, to have spent it in so kind a way; but I wish you had done so in your own name."

Hal.—"That I had no right to do."

At length the time drew near for a ball, which Mrs. Merton meant to give. Dress and the dance were the sole things that the girls could now think of, but Maude was bent more on that which is good and true. Maude had been at work on a large roll of cloth, which she bade Hal to give to the poor folk he spoke of. And Hal could but think, if all the rest of the girls were as good as Maude, they might spare all the pains they took to curl their hair and deck their forms.

At last came the night of the ball. There was a blaze of light in all the rooms, and the halls rang loud with mirth. Not a point was left out of Tom's dress that could add to the style of it. He had learnt to dance from one of the girls who had come to stay at the house, and was soon seen to show off.

While the jest, the song, and the dance went on, Hal sat in a dark part of the room to gaze on the gay scene, when up came Nash to tease him. Nash said he had come to tell him of Miss de Vere's wish that he should dance. It was in vain that Hal told him that he knew not a step, for Nash said he *must* stand up, as Miss de Vere had sent for him.

Poor Hal rose from his chair, and let Nash and his friend take him up the long room to the place where Maude stood. They did not give Hal time to say a word

to her, for they led him to her side at once, and just at the right time they gave a sign for the band to strike up, which it did.

Maude was much at a loss to know how Hal came to be in the dance (as he had said that he knew not a step), and still more to see him dance with her. Hal, who thought the left hand was just as good as the right, gave it, and then gave the right hand where it should have been the left, and so on, which made fine fun for those who sat out, but, of course, was no source of fun to Maude, whose wish was to close the scene, so she gave Hal both her hands, and brought the dance to an end; and soon they all went to sup.

At the first sight of the feast Hal could but gaze on the bright cups and plates of gold, the rich robes of silk, the choice wines and rare fruits, the quick hand and still tread of the black men, and all that made up the bright scene. But no one thought it worth his while to wait on Maude de Vere. And when Hal saw this he ran for some cake and wine, which he put on a huge tray to hand to her, if not with quite so much grace, at least with a heart more kind than the rest. But as Hal bent to let Maude reach the glass, Nash made a feint to catch his foot in the rug, and fell so close to Hal as to push him, and thus sent all the wine on Maude's neck. This brought a deep blush on her cheeks, for she saw that Nash meant to do it; and Hal, who saw it too, threw a glass full of wine in his face. At this Nash, who was a bad boy at heart, flung a glass at Hal's head; and a good thing was it for Nash that it gave him but a slight cut; yet it made Hal fly on Nash with a just wrath, and a fierce fight took place, which threw the whole room in a fright; Mr. Merton soon came up and put a stop to it.

Nash made out his tale. But one tale is good till the next is told. And Hal, with all his truth of heart, was firm in what he said, and of course there was Maude de Vere to turn the scale on his side; so that Mr. Merton soon saw how the case stood, and sent Hal to have his wounds bound up and his dress put to rights, which was all red with blood.

CHAPTER X.

THE next day, the young folk who had come to the ball were to dine at Mr. Merton's, and then go home.

They all took a walk; and as they went with slow steps on the heath, they saw a great crowd, which they found had come there to look on at a bull bait. All the young boys from Mr. Merton's of course felt a strong wish to see it; but there was one thing that stood in their way, which was, that Mrs. Merton had told them to keep a strict look out that they ran no risks in their walk.

"But," said one of the boys, "it is quite safe, for there is to be a stake, to which the bull will be bound fast, so he can't hurt us." Then he gave an arch smile, and said: "Why need she know that we have been here at all? I'm sure I hope none of us would be so mean as to tell tales?"

"No! no! no!" was on the lips of all but Hal, who did not speak.

"Hal Sandford has not said a word!" quoth one of them. "Sure he will not tell of us?"

"Nay," said Hal; "I do not wish to tell of you; but if Mr. and Mrs. Merton ask me where I have been, what am I to say?"

"What!" said the boy who spoke first; "can't you say that we took a walk on the road, and say no more?"

Hal.—"No; for that would not be the truth; add to which, a bull bait is a vile thing for the bull, the dogs, and the men, and none of us ought to go to it, least of all Mr. Tom Merton, for they love him at home too much for that."

"A fine thing, to be sure, for this young ape to take on him all these airs!" said this boy. "He is not more wise than the rest of us!" And all the boys took the same tone. But Nash came to Hal face to face, and, with a grin, said, "So this is all you do for Merton, is it? to turn spy, you mean brat!"

Hal, who had long seen how cold Tom had grown, felt more grief to find his friend was mute while all these jeers and taunts were thrust at him than at the jeers and taunts. And as soon as the crowd of boys would give him leave to speak, he said, "I am not more of a spy than the rest of you, and I want no more of you than you do of me; but were I so poor as to beg, I should not be such a fool as to ask alms of one of those who stand here!"

This sharp speech was too much for Tom, who now came up to Hal with a strut, and shook his fist at him, while he said: "Do you mean to taunt me?"

"Well done, Merton! Thrash him well!" said all the boys at once.

"Take that," said Tom, and he struck Hal a blow on the face.

Hal, who had not nerve for this last taunt, said, "O Mr. Tom, Mr. Tom, and has it come to this!" and then burst out in a loud cry, and hid his face.

All the rest now set on the poor boy; but when one of them took him by the hair, Hal was seen to brush off his

tears, look up, and ask them with a firm voice, "Why do you all wish to vex me?" Then he swung round, and broke from those who had laid hold of him."

Most of the boys fell back; but Nash told him, with a sneer, that this was the way they treat all such as he, and if he had not had his fill they would give him some more.

"As to that," said Hal, "though I let Mr. Merton's son strike me, there is not one of the rest that shall do it; or if he choose to try, he shall soon find that I know not what fear is."

At this Nash gave him a blow on the face which all but threw him down. His size and strength were twice as great as Hal's, and he had gone through scores of fights. The next blow from Nash threw Hal to the ground; but he soon rose and struck out well. Nash once more gave him a hurl which sent him full length on the rough road, and now the whole troop of boys came round them to look on, and all stood quite mute.

Nash had the most strength and skill, nor was one of the boys so old as he by two or three years, and to fight one who was so much less in size, in strength, and in years, was not fair, nor was it brave.

But Hal had a frame which had been made hard by work, and could bear pain or want; he was at once more brisk, as well as more cool than Nash, and so brave that no one could daunt him.

Four times had Hal been thrown down by the strength of his foe, and four times did he rise from these falls, just as strong as he was at first.

Nash, on his part, lost strength from so long a fight, and at the same time he lost his skill, for he felt so full of wrath that at last he struck here and there, and took no

aim. His breath grew short, and his knees would scarce bear his weight, yet rage and shame drove him on, and he made a rush with all his might at Hal, as though he had the wish to crush him with one blow.

All that Hal did now was to ward off each thrust till such time as he could see Nash grow faint, which he soon did, and then he came with a rush with all his might which threw down his foe.

But when Hal found that Nash could not rise, he put out his hand to help him up, and told him he felt much grief at what he had done. But Nash was dumb with shame and pain.

Just at this time the bull was led round the field, with strips of red, blue, and pink, which hung from his head, till at last he was brought up to the spot where he was to fight.

He was bound fast to a strong ring in a post, which was set in the ground.

The troop of young boys who had come with Tom Merton could not now be kept back, and all thoughts of what had been told them by their friends went from their mind.

Hal fell back—but kept a close eye on Tom. No scorn, no jeer, no blow could make Hal cease to love him, and screen him from harm.

Hal knew too well what a bull bait was to quit Tom till he had seen him once more in a safe place. And now the bull was made fast to the ring by a thick cord.

By and by a fierce dog was let loose, which, when he saw the bull, gave a yell, and made up to him. The bull let him come, but just as the dog made a spring to seize him, the bull made a rush to meet his foe, put his head to the ground, and with a toss sent the dog some yards up in

the air, and had not the men run to catch him, the fall would have been the death of him. The next dog met with the same fate, and so a third, and a fourth.

In the mean time a poor black man came up to ask alms of the boys. But they made jests at him that his skin was not of the same hue as their own, and that he was poor.

Tom (who had a warm heart in spite of the bad ways of those boys round him) took out his purse to give the poor man aid, but found that he had no cash in it, for it had all been spent at cards. So the black man then went round to the place where Hal stood, and held out his old hat to ask alms of him. Hal had not much to give, but what he had he threw in the hat, and said: "There is all I have, and if I had more it should be yours." Hal had no time to say much to him, for just then three fierce dogs made a rush all at once at the bull.

The bull was then heard to roar with pain, his mouth was full of foam and blood, he tore round and round the stake, and in fact went mad.

All the dogs now set on him at once, and bit all parts of him. And in his wrath he took the best aim he could, first at this dog, then at that, till at last the rope snapped in two and let him loose on the crowd.

No pen would serve to sketch the scene which now took place. Where all had been mirth and glee, came shrieks and cries which rent the sky. The group, which a short time since was seen to turn a deaf ear to all the kind hints that Hal had thrown out, would now give the whole world to be safe at home.

Hal was the one boy to keep up; he did not cry or run, but when the bull came close to him he leapt on one side, and the fierce brute went on.

No such luck had Tom, for he was the last of all the boys, and fell down in the path which the bull took. The mad beast tore up to him, and death must have been his doom had not Hal gone up to the bull with a prong (that had been left in the road by those who had run for their lives), which he stuck in his flank, and the wound that it gave made the bull turn sharp round from Tom. Wild with rage, he made at Hal, who would have paid the price of that aid he gave to his friend, but just then the poor black man made a rush at the bull with a thick stick, and with such skill as to turn the rage of the fierce beast from Hal to him. At the same time he gave a jump on one side (as Hal had done), but soon came round, and laid hold of the bull's tail, while at the same time he hit his sides with hard blows of the stick. In vain did the mad brute writhe in the pain, for his brave foe clung on, and did not quit his hold, nor leave off the blows till the bull grew faint. Some men now came up, who threw a rope round his head and bound him to a tree.

In the mean time some of Mr. Merton's men, who had been sent out in search of the young boys, took Tom up from the ground where he lay, and though he had no wounds, he was next to dead from fear.

Hal did not go back to Mr. Merton's house with the rest; for when he had first seen that all was right with his friend Tom, he went home to the farm, and took with him the black man, to whom they all might be said to owe their lives.

While these scenes went on, Mrs. Merton, who sat at home, felt that all was not right with the young folk, for they had been out so long.

Mrs. Count did not do much to soothe her friend's fears,

Tom, who was the last of all the boys, fell down in the path which the bull took.—Page 74.

Sandford and Merton.

for now that poor Hal was the theme, her words were like sharp swords, and her tongue was full of gall.

While Mrs. Count was in this frame of mind, Mr. Merton by chance came in the room, and he did all he could to calm her tone; but in vain, so he said, "May be a short space of time will serve to show which kind of boys would be the most fit friends for our son; and till you can find but one bad thing that Hal has done, I could not let you treat the poor boy in so cold and harsh a way."

Just then a maid ran in, who said, with a voice that was faint with fear, "Oh, such a thing! Poor child, poor dear child, poor dear Mr. Tom!"

"What of him, Jane? What of him?" said Mrs. Merton.

"Nay," quoth the maid, "they told me he was not much hurt; but that the bad boy Sandford took him to a bull bait, and the mad bull gave him a toss in the air with his horns. And John and James have got him in their arms to bring him home."

As soon as Mrs. Merton heard these words she gave a loud shriek, and fell down in a swoon, and while Mrs. Count did her best to bring her round, Mr. Merton, who was pale with fear, went out to learn the truth of the tale.

He had not gone far when he met the crowd of young folk, and with them Tom in the arms of the groom.

By and by, when Mrs. Merton's nerves were more calm, she said: "Ah, Tom, my sweet love, that wretch of a boy has not had the face to come back with you, and it would serve him right if the bull would fly at him!"

"What wretch of a boy do you mean?" said Tom.

Mrs. Merton.—"Whom can I mean, my love, but that

vile Hal Sandford, who has all but cost you your life. To think that he should take you to a bull bait!"

Tom.—"He—he take me to a bull bait! He did all he could to keep me from it; and it was I who was in fault, for I took no heed of what he said."

Mr. Merton.—"Who was it, then, that could have been so rash, Tom?"

Tom.—"Nay, we were all to blame but Hal, who I think would have gone down on his knees to beg of me not to join in so rash a sport, for he said it would give you so much pain if you knew it."

At this a blush came on Mrs. Merton's cheek; but Mrs. Count threw out a hint that it might be Hal's fears that kept him out of the way.

"No, Mrs. Count, no," said one of the boys; "it was

not Hal's fears that kept him from the sport, for he fought Nash in too brave a way for that. And though Nash is twice as big as Hal Sandford, and fought well, yet Hal beat him. All the while the bull bait went on, I saw him keep his eyes on us—that is, on Tom—but he did not join us till the bull broke loose."

"So *this* is the boy that you would cast off," said Mr. Merton. "But let us hear more of this tale, for as yet I know not what risk Hal may have run, nor how he got off with his life."

At this, one of the men who had stood to look on at the scene, was had up to tell all that he saw.

He spoke of Hal's fight with Nash, and of the brave way that he drew off the bull from Tom, though he had just hit him a blow on the face.

That such a deed, so brave and so well meant, should have been done by a child—and while he had cause for spite, too—drew loud praise from all in the room,

Mrs. Merton was dumb with shame at the ease with which she had been made a sort of foe to Hal, who yet had twice stood 'twixt her son and death. And it was clear to all how much more pure and good was the heart of the poor boy from the farm than that of all those boys of high rank who now stood by to hear his praise sung.

"Ah!" said Mr. Merton, with a deep sigh, "I fear this good and brave Hal has not had fair play from the rest of the boys. What else could make him turn from us in this way? And now I call to mind that one of you spoke of a blow on the face that Hal had had; sure, Tom, you could not have been so base as to strike the best friend you have!"

At this, Tom hung down his head; his cheeks were red

with a blush that burnt his face, and the tears one by one ran down it.

Mrs. Merton saw this, and would have claspt her child to her breast, but Mr. Merton, with some haste, took him from her, and said: "It is not now a time to give way to love for a child who has just been found out to act the most vile part that a man or boy could be known to take, and which is a cause of deep shame to you and me, my dear!"

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Mr. Merton's mind was full of thoughts which rose out of what he had just heard, he was glad to have a call from Mr. Barlow, who just then came in, and gave him a warm shake of the hand; but he saw such a gloom in Mr. Merton's face that he had fears that all was not right with Tom. So he said, "How is your son?" that Mr. Merton might talk of him, which he did not fail to do. He put his hand in Mr. Barlow's, and said: "Oh, my dear sir, I fear all my hopes are at an end in that boy; and that the pains you have been at to train him up in the way he should go have borne no fruit; for since he has been home I have seen no one thing in him but pride."

Mr. Barlow heard all that he had to say, and then bade him be of good cheer. "The child is young," said he, "and so there is hope; but we must give him time. Now we all know that it takes a long time to change so small a thing as speech, but it is done at last; how long then must it take to change the heart? Let us not give him up, Merton."

Mr. Merton.—"But Tom seems now to have lost all the good that he learnt from you."

Mr. Barlow.—"In my mind all men are more weak than bad. Do you think that half the vice that fills the world comes from a bad heart? No, I am sure it does not. To be firm is the thing we all want, to have it in us to say 'No,' when that which is wrong is set up for us to join in."

Mr. Merton.—"What you say is no doubt true. But, oh, how base it was of my boy to cast off his best friend, with whom he had spent so great a part of his life! Nay, dear sir, it will shock you to hear that Tom went so far as to strike him a blow on the face. You will, I fear, own that this looks more like a bad heart than a weak will."

Mr. Barlow.—"I do not feel at all sure that your son wants warmth of heart. Nay, I have seen signs—sparks, as it were—from a bright light that dwells there, which may have slept for a while, but shall it not burst forth once more? This rests with you and me. For God, who plants this light in a child's breast, plants it there for use, and if we take no heed to put good oil in the lamp, how can we hope to keep up a bright light? We will try once more, Merton."

Mr. Merton.—"You give me hopes, then?"

Mr. Barlow.—"I do, and what I plead for Tom is this—the tone of self in those proud boys of the world with whom he has been thrown. To tell you the truth, from the time that Tom left me, I have had no rest, for the fear that some of his young friends here would spoil him. And to be free with you, Merton, I trace all this harm to the bad fare which your son drank in when he was caught by the high rank, the fine names, the fine clothes, and fine

airs of those boys whom you brought here for him to make friends with.

"How could we hope that a young child should be kept from that which we men can scarce keep free from? Now, just think, sir, when a man makes choice of a wife who is to share his hearth with him day by day, and year by year, nay, is to be his friend for life, and more than this, is to raise up souls for the life to come, which of us is there that does not choose her for her fair face? It is that we fall in love with, sir, the tint on her cheek, the fine teeth, the voice, the grace with which she moves; but not her soul. Well, then, should we not grant to the young child, in the hey day of life, at least to be as weak as we are, when he makes choice of friends with whom to pass the term of a high day or two?"

These words sank deep in the heart of Mr. Merton; grief and joy both took their place there; grief to find that he had been the cause of this sad change in Tom, yet joy to bear that grief, and think the while that it was not so much a bad heart in his boy as the chance that had thrown the snare in his way.

The time had now come for the young folk to take their leave of Mr. and Mrs. Merton; but Maude de Vere was to stay. And when they were gone Tom went to join Mr. Barlow, who had set out for a walk. Tom gave a look up in his face as though he had some grave thing to make known to him; and when Mr. Barlow saw this, he said: "What is it you want, my boy?"

"Nay, sir," said Tom, "I know not how to tell you. But I have been a bad boy, and I fear now that you will love me no more."

Mr. Barlow.—"If you feel your faults, my dear young

friend, that is a great step on the way to mend them. Let me know what it is you wish to tell me, and if I can aid you, I am sure I will."

Tom.—"Oh, sir! when you speak to me in this kind way it hurts me much more than if you were in a rage with me, for when men are in a rage, one does not much mind what they say; but your kind tone seems to pierce me to the heart, for I know I am not worth it."

Mr. Barlow.—"But, my boy, if you see that you have done a wrong thing, you may make up your mind to do it no more. Few boys or men are so good as not to err at times, and if you know your faults, you can be on your guard so as not to give way to them."

Tom.—"Then, sir, I will tell you all that I did, for it lies like a lump of lead on my heart. You must know, then, that as soon as I got out of your sight, I was a worse boy than when I first came to you."

Mr. Barlow.—"But why should you take so harsh a view of what you have done? I hope it is not a true one. You were by no means free from faults when you left me, you know."

Tom.—"No, sir; but what I have now done is ten times worse, for I have been the most vile boy in the world!"

Mr. Barlow.—"My young friend, you make me start! What can you have done?"

Tom.—"That you must judge, sir. When I went home I found there such a lot of nice boys—as I thought—who had each come from some grand house, or some grand school, and with such lots of fun in them, that I took to them at once, and when Hal came to join us, I thought him mean by the side of them. It made me blush to see his great red hands hang down by his side, as if he did not

know what to do with them. Then you see, sir, he could not dance; and he took up a huge tray when he went to hand a glass of wine to one of the girls, and fell fast off in a deep sleep in his chair while the songs went on. I tell you this, sir, that you may know what it was that made me such a bad boy. But now Hal's good and brave acts have brought me to a right sense of things, and I hate my own self when I think how mean I have been."

Mr. Barlow.—"I fear this fine set of young boys did not teach you much that it was worth your while to know."

Tom.—"No, sir, but I did not think so then, and so I did what I saw them do, and would talk as I heard them talk, and I grew such a fool that I cast off Hal."

Mr. Barlow.—"That was sad, for I am sure he loves you. But it will be all one to him, for though you are apt at most things, I do not think he will learn how to make land yield, or to raise food from what you can tell him, Tom; so it will be best to leave him to the men of the farm (for this I know has been Hal's taste at all times) while you keep to your new friends. Be that as it may, I will tell him that you have now made a new choice, and hint to him that I think it will be best to give you up as a friend from this time."

Tom.—"Oh, sir, I did not think you would treat me so! I love Hal with all my heart, and there is not a thing that I would not do if he would but make it up with me!"

Mr. Barlow.—"But then, may be, all those choice boys and girls will give you up!"

Tom.—"I care not if they do, sir; but I fear I have gone too far in my bad ways for Hal to love me as he did."

Tom went on to tell Mr. Barlow all the rest of the sad tale, till his voice broke, and he wept for some time.

He then put this to Mr. Barlow: "Do you think Hal could make friends with me once more?"

Mr. Barlow.—"Tom, I can't screen from you the truth, which is that I think ill of what you have done. But if your heart now tells you that you did wrong, and you say so to Hal, I make no doubt that he will put out his hand for you to shake it."

Tom.—"Oh, sir! will you be so good as to bring him here now?"

Mr. Barlow.—"Stay, stay, my dear young friend. What is Hal to come here for? Have you not cast him off, thrust him from you, and gone so far as to strike him in the face? Do you think that flesh and blood can stand this?"

Tom.—"What, then, must I do, sir?"

Mr. Barlow.—"If you want to keep your friend, it is for you to go to him."

Tom.—"What, sir! Go to a farm, and show my face to all the men there!"

Mr. Barlow—"Just now I thought you told me that there was not a thing you would not do, and yet it is too much to call on Hal at his own house. You think, then, that to act ill is not so bad as to look as if you *thought* you had done so."

Tom.—"But what would all the folk say if they saw the son of a rich squire go down on his knees to the son of a man who keeps a farm?"

Mr. Barlow.—"May be they would say you had more sense of wrongs done than they thought you had; but you are to act as you please; with the views you still seem to hold, Hal is not a fit friend for you, and, as I said just now, it will be best for you to keep to the new set of boys that you have met with in your own rank of life."

Mr. Barlow then made as if he would go, but Tom burst out in a loud wail to beg of him not to leave him, on which Mr. Barlow said:

"I do not want to leave you, Tom, but our talk is at an end. You said to me, 'What shall I do?' and I have told you how you ought to act if you would gain back the love of a good friend; but as you do not like to do that which I would have you do, you must, of course, go your own way."

"Pray, sir, pray, sir, do not leave me!" said Tom, with sobs of grief; "it was base in me to treat Hal as I did, most base! And so they think at home, and if you give me up, sir, I have no friend left."

Mr. Barlow.—"That will be your own fault; can you not keep all your friends, and speak out what you feel to each of them? It would do the rich boys good if you did; it would please those at home; Hal will be your friend once more; and I shall think well of you, as I have long done."

Tom.—"Can you think well of me, sir; can you, now that you have heard all?"

Mr. Barlow.—"As long as I have known you I have thought you vain and proud; but, at the same time, I think you have the sense to see your faults."

Tom.—"Dear sir, thank you. Oh, sir, I will set off at once and ask Hal to make it up with me. But will you come with me? Do, pray, sir, be so good."

Mr. Barlow.—"Stop, stop, my young friend, you will do things so fast! I am glad you have made up your mind to go; but I would have you speak first to those at home who love you still, and tell them of it, and, in the mean time, I will go and call at the farm."

So Mr. Barlow set out to Sandford farm. It stood on a sweet spot on the side of a hill, at the foot of which ran a clear stream. The house was small, but warm, snug, and neat.

As Mr. Barlow came up, he saw Sandford at the plough, and Hal was at the head of the horse. But when Hal saw Mr. Barlow come through the field, he let fall his whip, and sprang to meet him. As soon as he had had a kind shake of the hand from his friend, he said:

"How is Tom Merton, sir? When I saw you come through this field, I knew you must have come from Mr. Merton's."

Mr. Barlow.—"Yes, I have; but I grieve to find that Tom and you are not on such good terms as you were."

Hal.—"I grieve for it too, sir, yet I do not know why this change has come on Tom; but still, though he did not treat me so well as he ought to have done, I have a great wish to hear that he is well."

Mr. Barlow.—"That you know, Hal, you might have learnt if you had gone back to Mr. Merton's house."

Hal.—"But how could I help it, sir? And since you speak to me on the——"

Here poor Hal's voice shook, so that he could not go on.

Mr. Barlow.—"Well, Hal, let me hear it."

Hal.—"You know, sir, that I did not wish to go to Mr. Merton's, for I thought that the boys and girls there would laugh at my ways, and make fun of me, and I had my fears that Tom would grow shy of me at his own house."

Mr. Barlow.—"Then it did not strike you as strange, Hal?"

Hal.—"No, sir, I can't say it did, for I find at all times that they who are rich do treat the poor in the way that

Tom did me. But in this case I did not see why it was to be done, as I did not want to go to Mr. Merton's house. I knew that I was not born and bred in the same rank of life as the rest were; but at your house, sir, it was Tom Merton that sought me out, not I him."

Mr. Barlow.—"This is true, Hal."

Hal.—"How could such a boy as I am get on at a rich man's house, with boys and girls all round me that curl their hair, and dress as if for show? If I spoke, they would laugh at me, and do what I would, I was sure to hear the word 'clown!' I don't think you would like their talk, sir."

Mr. Barlow.—"But, Hal, if you did not like their talk, you might have borne with them for a while. And, then, I have heard a word or two of a fight you had."

Hal.—"Oh, sir, I was once in a great rage, but that I could not help, and I hope you will not think ill of me for it. There was a Miss de Vere, oh, such a kind young girl, sir! She was the one girl that did not laugh at me; and there was a bad, bold boy there, who was most rude to her, and all for that she spoke to me. What could I do but take her part?"

Mr. Barlow.—"Well, Hal, I do not much blame you. But why did you run off and not give Mr. Merton one word of thanks, when he has been so kind to you?"

Hal.—"Ah, sir, I have thought of that, and I grieve much for it; but I did not leave Tom so long as I could be of use to him."

Hal then spoke of all that took place at the bull bait, which Mr. Barlow said he had just heard.

"But," quoth he, "there is one thing, dear boy, which I

have not heard you name, and that is, that you drew the bull from Tom so as to save his life."

Hal.—"As to that, sir, I hope I should have done the same for the least of my friends. But I think we should all have lost our lives but for the black man, who came up to save us."

Mr. Barlow.—"Hal, I think well of you for all that you have done; but do you mean to shake off Tom Merton for this one fault of his?"

Hal.—"Oh, no! But you see, sir, though I am poor, I do not care to be much with those that scorn me. Let him spend his time with his own rich friends; I care most for those in my own rank of life. Yet sure, sir, it is not I that have thrown him off, but he that has cast me off."

Mr. Barlow.—"But if Tom grieves for his fault, and has the wish to come to you and say so, would he gain your love once more?"

Hal.—"Oh, dear sir, I know well that he would not treat me with scorn, taunt, and mock me; not he! It was the proud boys round him that set him on to it."

Mr. Barlow.—"Well, he wants much to see you, that he may ask you to take him to your heart once more."

Hal.—"I will go to him at once, sir. Yet there's the plough, which I can't leave just now, but soon I will get a horse and come to him."

Mr. Barlow.—"No, Hal, there is no need for that; Tom has been a bad boy to use you so ill, and it is for him to come and say so to you. The least he can do is to call on you, else who could trust him for the time to come?"

Mr. Barlow then bade Hal tell him where he could find the black man.

Hal.—"He came home with me, and he sleeps in a small

bed that we have put up in the barn for him, and he has his meals from the house; he works hard on the farm, and earns his bread."

Mr. Barlow now took leave of Hal, and went back to Mr. Merton's, where he found Tom with Maude de Vere.

Tom had a book in his hand, from which he read to Maude this tale:

"One dark night a thief came to a man's house to rob it, and when the house dog heard him he gave a loud bark. At this the man of the house sprang from his bed to look out, but saw no one, nor did he hear the least sound; so he bade the dog be still, and went back to sleep. The thief in the mean time had hid in the shed in a state of great fear, but when he found that the dog was bound by a chain, and did not now bark, he crept to the door of the house, and took out his bunch of false keys to try the lock. The dog saw him, and set up his loud bark, so the man of the house put his head out once more to look round him, but as he saw no one, and found that all was now quite still, he said, in a great rage: 'Down, you brute! down, I tell you! You will not let one have a wink of sleep!' So at last the dog left off, and in the mean time the thief made his way to the house, and took all that he could find. The next day, when the man saw what had been done, he said: 'This will teach me to give ear to a true friend when he warns me.'"

Tom.—"That's Hal's voice at the bull bait, Maude! Dogs are so good that I think they come next to our own race. Mr. Barlow tells me that no beasts in a wild state can err, for God gives them a sense which guides them in the right way at all times."

Maude.—"Yes; but though this sense in brutes is so

true that it could not err, still they have no sense of right and wrong, as man has. Man has the right to fight for, and the wrong to fight off; and but for this choice, no man could be good or bad."

Tom.—"Mr. Barlow told me that this sense in brutes serves to teach them to know their foes, to bring up their young, and to get food; but what we call mind and soul (which takes the place of it in man) has far more height."

Maude.—"Just so; and more than this, brutes are shut out from the world to come."

Tom put down the book, and said, "'Do what you ought, come what may,' shall be round my coat of arms when I am a man."

Maude.—"And you shall have it on a ring till then, which I hope you will wear for my sake."

Maude then went out for a walk, but took with her a choice ring, to have the words cut on it, and when she came back, she found Tom with Mr. and Mrs. Merton, and Mr. Barlow; but there was such a change in Tom's dress, and in his hair, that few would know him. He had cut off his curls; stript from his dress all that was fine, and his clothes were as plain as could be.

"What in the world has the boy done?" said Mrs. Merton; "why, my dear, you look quite a fright! You have the air of a boy at the plough, more than a son of ours!"

Tom drew up, and said, "I am now what I ought at all times to have been; and I mean from this day to bid good bye to all that is proud and fine."

Tom said this in so firm and grave a tone, that no one could smile at it.

CHAPTER XII.

THE next day, Tom rose at dawn, put on his new dress, and then went to Mr. Barlow's, to ask him to take him to the farm house.

When they came near, Tom caught sight of Hal, who drove the sheep on the marsh some way off. He could not be kept back, but sprang on with all his might, and when he got up to Hal, he held his sides, and could scarce speak for want of breath. Hal knew by his haste that all was right, and it was a source of great joy to Mr. Barlow to see the two boys meet like friends once more.

Mr. Barlow.—"I bring you one who grieves much for his faults, and comes to own them."

Tom.—"I have done so much to wrong you, Hal, that I feel I have no right to hope that you will make friends with me."

Hal.—"Nay, I think now but of what you were at Mr. Barlow's."

Tom.—"Thank you, Hal, thank you! I hope I shall all my life keep in mind the way in which you bore it all, and the way in which you now make it up with me."

Hal then led Tom by the hand to a small but neat house, where he saw Sandford and his wife.

At the side of the fire sat the black man who had done so much for them at the bull bait, and Tom went up to him to give him his thanks.

When they went to dine, Tom sat down with the rest. He ate a good meal, and when they all rose, he thought there would be no harm in a chat with the black man on bull baits; so he said, with some pomp in his tone:

"When I call to mind the ease with which you kept back that fierce brute, I look on it that in your part of the world you are sharp at that kind of sport!"

"Sir," said the black man, "it is not in my own land that I was taught this sort of sport, for there the beasts we hunt are much more fierce. And when I brought to mind how you white folk scoff at us blacks, I own I thought it strange to see scores of you run off at the sight of a tame bull!"

Tom's cheek had now a shade more red in it, and he held his tongue.

As night drew on, Mr. Barlow made a move, and gave his young friend a hint that it grew late. But Tom took him by the hand, and told him he should like to stay some time with Hal. And then, with a grace all his own, he said in a loud voice so that all in the room should hear:

"The more I think of what I have done, the more shame do I feel." And then Tom threw his eyes up to Mr. Barlow's face. "But you, dear sir, have told me that all I can now do is to say so. The whole of my life shall I feel a sense of the great love that Hal has shown for me, when I gave him so much cause to hate me."

Hal threw his arms round Tom's neck, and all the rest stood mute to see the rich squire's son tell out his faults to the plain folk of the farm house.

They then sat down to sup, and Tom ate his bread and cheese with a great zest.

The next day he rose at five o'clock, yet he found it a hard task to wake up at such an hour. But Tom's pride in his new mode of life brought him through it, for he thought of what Mr. Merton would say, as well as Mr. Barlow and all in the house, if he could not be firm. So

"I have done so much to wrong you, Hal," said Tom, "that I feel you will not make friends with me."—Page 91.

he leapt out of bed, put on his dress, and went to work on the farm with Hal.

In a short time Tom found this new kind of life a good one; he ate well, and his health got strong by it.

Day by day Mr. Barlow made a call on his young friend, for he took this stay at the farm house to be the turn point in Tom's life.

Each day would Mr. Barlow go round the farm with Tom, and the black man told them tales of the hunt.

This went on from week's end to week's end, when one day Mr. Merton came to call, and he gave his dear boy a hug and a kiss at the door, and told him he had now come to take him back to his own home.

"Mr. Barlow speaks so well of you," said he, "that I shall dwell no more on the past, and I now feel proud, dear boy, to call you my son."

Tom.—"Oh, yes; I shall be so glad to come home to you both, and stay at home now, and love you, as you say you will both love me!"

Just then in came Mr. Sandford, who made a bow to his guest, and bade him walk in. Mr. Merton said, "I beg to thank you, Sandford, with all my heart, for what you and your son have done for Tom; for he is not like the same boy." He then put a purse full of bank notes in Sandford's hand.

"What is this?" said he, when he saw the notes; but he shut up the purse with much care, put it back in Mr. Merton's hand, and told him, with thanks, that he could not take it.

"No!" said Mr. Merton, "why not? Your girls may want it; and there's your son, too, and your own self,

Sandford; for you may feel the want of ease some day—oh, pray take it."

"No, sir, no," said he, with a shake of the head; "what is it but this ease that does all the harm? Ah, sir, if you did but know the peace one feels when one guides the plough with a good team, and then goes to bed to sleep all night like a top, you might wish you had been brought up to the plough. But if you would not do a harm to a whole race of Sandfords, pray leave us as we are."

They all then sat down to dine, and Mr. Barlow came to join them.

At the end of the meal in ran Hal. "Oh, such a team! —such a fine team stands at our back door!" said he; and then Hal said to Mr. Sandford, "The man told me it is for you!"

Sandford ran out to look at at, and, when he came back, he said to Mr. Merton, "I did not think you had been such a good judge of a horse! I guess you have sent these nags for me to say what I think of them. Well, then, all I can say is that they are the best breed of horse in the world, and the best of that breed!"

"Such as they are," said Mr. Merton, "they are yours; and I can't think you will say 'No' this time, Sandford."

Sandford stood mute for some time to gain breath, when Tom came up to him and said:

"Pray don't say you will not take them, for the team was meant more for Hal than for you."

Sandford felt that in that case he must needs take the gift; so he sent it to the farm, and said: "It beats Knowles' team all to bits, which has long been thought the best in all these parts."

When he had seen to the wants of the black man, Mr.

Merton took his leave; and while Tom rose to bid his hosts fare well, he said to his young friend, "I can't thank you too much, Hal, for the two great truths which I have learnt from you."

Hal.—"Pray, what are they?"

Tom.—"The words of one of them are on this ring—read them."

Hal reads—"Do what you ought, come what may."

Tom.—"Now read the words on *this* ring, which your friend Maude de Vere sends you."

Hal reads—"If we would be great, we must first learn to be good."

Tom.—"I chose the words, Hal, but the truth of them I have learnt from you."

THE END.

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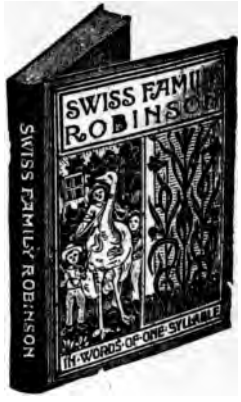

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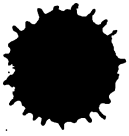
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